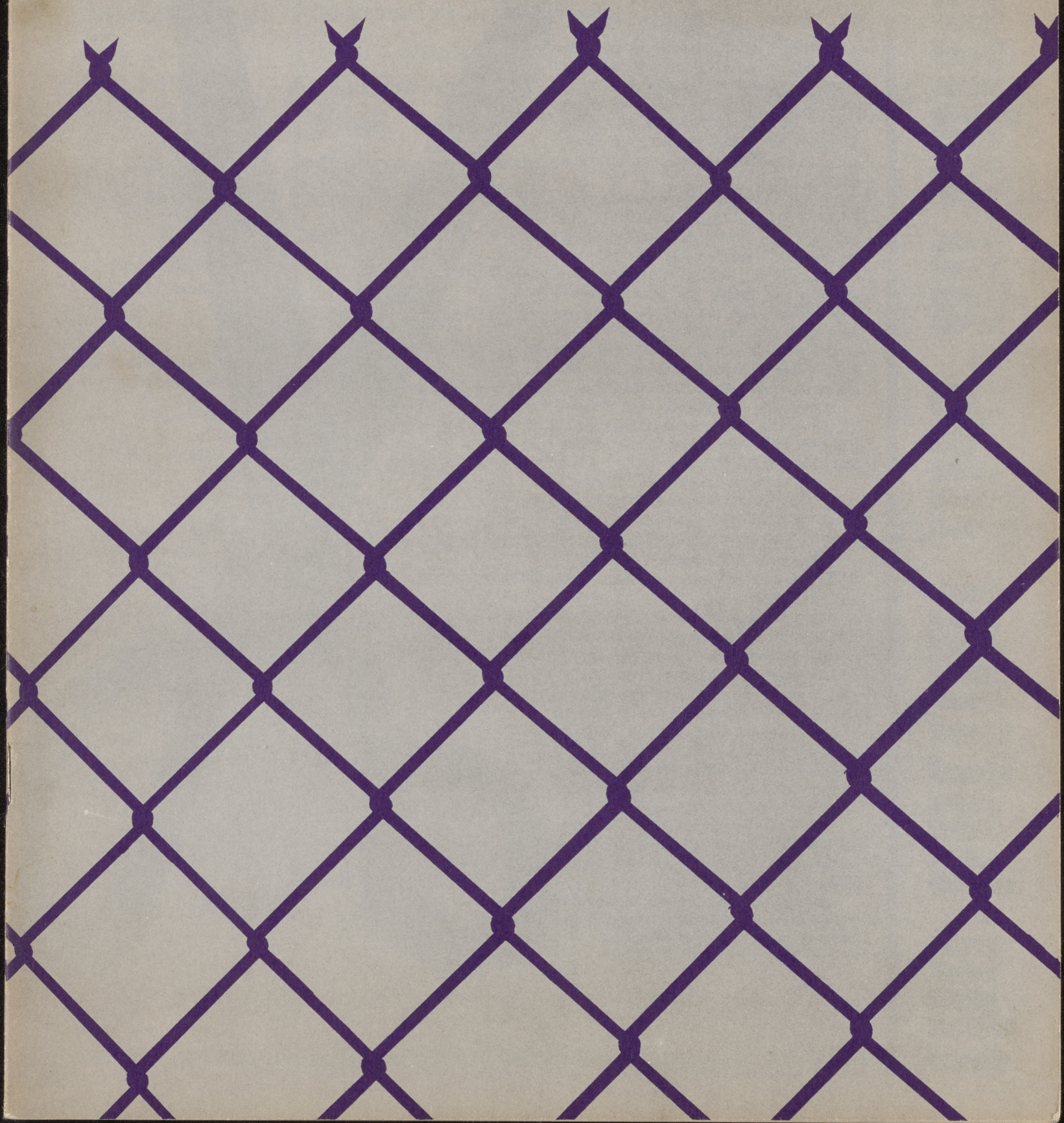
IN UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1980



the bottom line-an editorial

censorship...

t. earlye scott

During a pornography case, portions of a book were read aloud and the judge ruled that indeed the passage was pornographic and should be censored. That passage came from the Bible. In many countries the Bible is not considered acceptable reading material and it is a crime to own it.

In the United States groups of parents frequently meet to decide what books may appear on the shelves of the public school libraries. No books on homosexuality are ever permitted and in some books of questionable reading the parents simply take scissors and cut out the offensive passages. The small groups of parents dictate what is and is not offensive. In some states teachers have been fired for having students read an "off limits" book.

Censorship has always been fought.

Now we have a censorship case right in our own back yard. And frankly, I find this frightening.

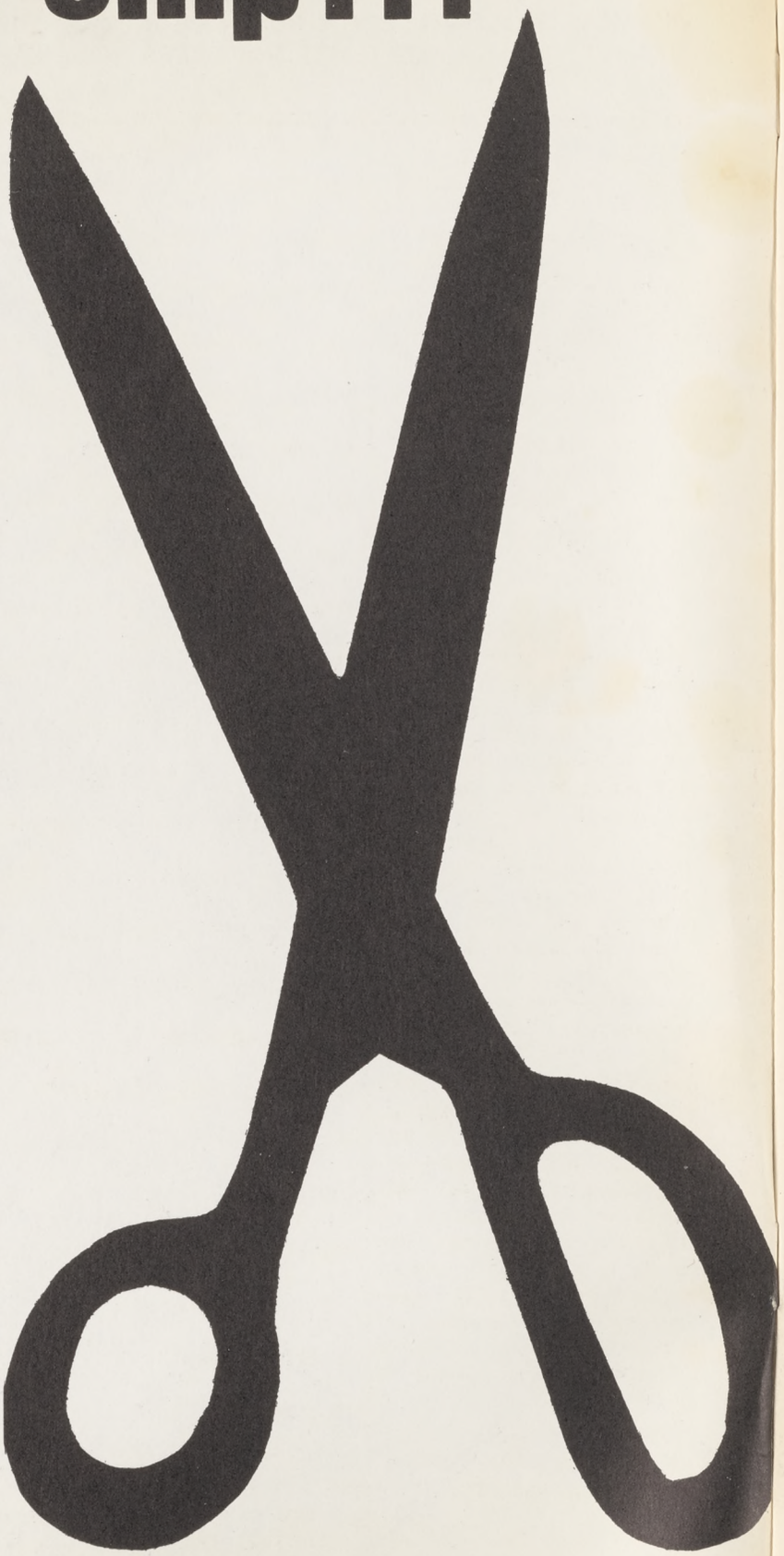
MCC Houston has returned 150 copies of IN UNITY because the board of directors claims it contains unacceptable reading material. (See letter on page 23).

Censorship is a crime in a free society which protects the freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

Our churches have been burned, our people destroyed because certain groups of people believed that we as gay people should be banned from society and the only way to do that is to cut out our hearts. These same people want us banned from housing and from jobs and from any rights whatsoever. We have been burned and censored our whole lives just as unacceptable reading material has been burned and censored for centuries.

How can we morally censor and ban IN UNITY and thus do to each other what we are fighting against every day of our lives? It's beyond me.

Perhaps all subscriptions to churches should include scissors so the magazine can be "made right" before distribution!



IN UNITY

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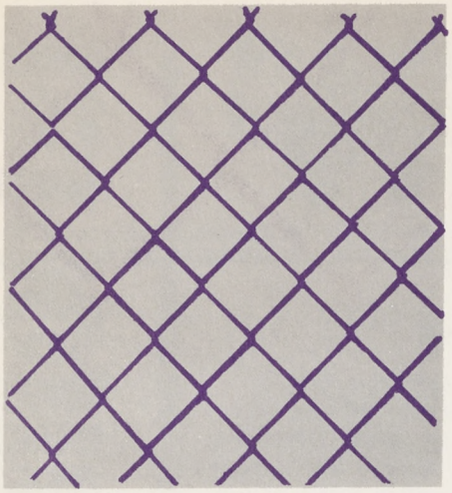


Presence of Jesus seen at Cuban refugee camp

By Dale Leeche

Last week I saw Jesus. He wasn't in flowing white robes, but He was there. I saw Him in the faces of a black lesbian Cuban refugee and her lover. Both women were dressed shabbily in the hand-me-downs that were (lovingly) donated to the American Red Cross and then distributed to these homeless people. I never would have guessed that one of them had a Masters degree in accounting, but she did. The tears of joy that filled their eyes, when our translator explained I could find a sponsor for them *together*, transcended all language barriers.

My three days in the Cuban refugee camp at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas were filled with many such experiences. My entrance to the camp itself started in 109 degree temperatures as an armed soldier checked our clearance passes. As the gate closed behind us, I suddenly realized that the rolls of barbed wire along all the fences were even more oppressive than the constant heat. The guards, complete with three foot long clubs and "riot masks," were stationed every 30 feet surrounding the encampment area, two at each station. The escorts that accompanied me explained that in the encampment area you could find a black market, prostitution and blackmail. Venereal disease was also prevalent among the refugees. I began to notice a pattern of speech when anybody in the resettlement agencies spoke about the Cubans. It was impersonal and dehumanizing. I hoped we would be able to remember the humanity of our gay brothers and sisters and not reduce them to an alien registration number on *another* government form.

When I met our translator/processor I realized God had sent the right person to fill this special job. His patience and forbearance with homophobic people, the heat and scared Cubans was amazing. He took extra moments to *really* talk with the refugees, a little slower perhaps, but the self-respect he was returning to people could not be measured in minutes. As I began to work with him in processing Cubans, I saw many things.

I saw bayonet scars on faces, arms and stomachs.

I saw an epileptic covered with bruises and scrapes that he had received in a seizure. He had the seizure because he was without medicine for four days when he arrived at Fort Chaffee. The guards

MCC helping, placing gay Cuban refugees

DATELINE TORONTO, CANADA -- Nearly $60,000 has been pledged to begin work to aid 10,000 to 12,000 Lesbian and Gay Cuban refugees being held at concentration camp-style facilities of three US military camps. Responding to an appeal by the Rev. Troy D. Perry, start-up funds have been pledged by ministers representing Metropolitan Community Churches attending the UFMCC Eastern Ministers Conference outside of Toronto, Canada. "At this moment," Rev. Perry said, "there are thousands of Lesbians and Gay men in the Cuban refugee camps who have been stigmatized with the label homosexual. Up to this point, not one social agency has come forward to express willingness to help them. They are in limbo behind barbed wire at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; and Fort Chafee, Arkansas. They are despised and rejected by the other refugees.

"We are appealing to all Lesbians and Gay men to accept the responsibility of caring that we might demonstrate to the world that we are not guilty of discrimination and that we are compassionate. It is our aim to negotiate with government agencies to facilitate the release and relocation of our sisters and brothers. Further, we will arrange for them to be visited now in the camps, ministered to and reassured that the Lesbian and Gay community in our country really cares."

Working from UFMCC headquarters in Los Angeles, a specially assigned Task Force is establishing official contact with the US Government and other resettlement agencies. The Task Force is also finding sponsors who will assist in finding jobs and homes for refugees and in gathering financial assistance to get the refugees -- who lack families to sponsor them -- out of the camps. Within the next three weeks, teams of Spanishspeaking Lesbians and Gay men will be sent into the three camps. Persons in the vicinities of the camps fluent in Spanish and/or with expertise in Cuban culture are urged to contact UFMCC. The Rev. Bob Arthur, Director of UFMCC's Institutional Ministries, has been deputized to work for six months in this effort. The UFMCC Refugee Program will be working in conjunction with the Carter Administration's Interagency Task Force, with the International Rescue Commission and with the U.S. Catholic Conference to aid refugees from Castroite homophobia.

"When Castro gave permission for anyone who wanted to to leave Cuba to go, the tidal wave of immigrants began," Rev. Perry said. "Boat owners who came to Cuba to pick up friends and relatives were forced by the Cuban government to take as many people as the boats would hold. People were marched at bayonet point and loaded onto the boats. Members of the press who have spoken with some of these refugees report evidence of massive physical abuse including bayonet marks. They are our sisters and brothers who have suffered this abuse.

"We have a tremendous job ahead of us," Rev. Perry said. "We are asking for help from throughout the Lesbian and Gay community in the United States."

Checks may be made payable to "UFMCC Cuban Relief Fund," a special tax-deductible account, which will be administered separately by the UFMCC. For further information, contact Dale Leeche, c/o UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, California 90029, (213) 464-5100.

wouldn't let him go to the hospital without a special pass. Since he couldn't speak English and the guards didn't understand Spanish, he couldn't explain what he needed, or why.

I saw tears when a young man in a dress realized he didn't need to dress like a woman to prove he was gay. We would help him anyway. They were tears of joy.

I saw more tears on another young man. He was a local gay person who worked for one of the resettlement agencies. Since he was working with us, he told me his "good Christian friends" were harassing him and his job was being threatened. These were tears caused by pain.

I saw a guard yelling "joto" at a group of refugees waiting to be processed by us. I thought how sad that this person's first word learned in a foreign language was "queer."

I saw another guard taking a polaroid picture of a group of Cuban friends, and give them the picture to keep.

I saw one Cuban entertaining his friends, who were waiting in the open sun in 105 degree temperatures, by singing for them. After each song a round of applause could be heard. After about 10 minutes, four Jeeps full of armed M.P.'s arrived to "break it up." (Shades of L.A.P.D.!!)

I saw a sponsor being very surprised! As he met the Cuban and they began to converse in broken English and broken Spanish -- they found out they liked a lot of the same movies and both *loved* Barbra Streisand.

I saw a middle-aged refugee of Polish descent. He was in Cuba because his family had escaped Poland just before Hitler took over, and now he was escaping one more time. I prayed this would be the end of his oppression.

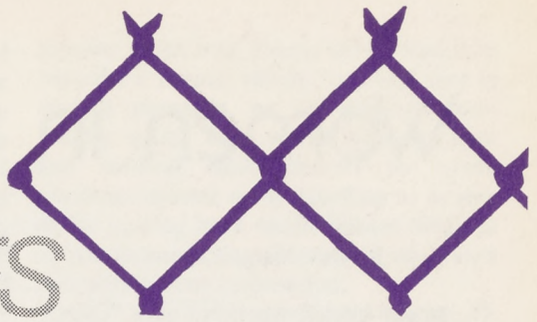
But every day his oppression, and the oppression of thousands like him, continues. Every day 438 immigrants become U.S. citizens, but our gay brothers and sisters remain isolated behind barbed-wire until one of us offers them a home. Every day, while two billion one-dollar bills are in circulation, more money is needed to sponsor, clothe, feed and offer medical assistance to helpless refugees.

I went to the camp at Fort Chaffee to meet refugees, but I met our brothers and sisters. We *are* everywhere!

If you would like to help or would like more information, please contact:

UFMCC Cuban Relief Fund
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 464-5100

GAY CUBAN REFUGEES



By T. Earlye Scott

At first glance it might have looked like any talent show sponsored by the gay community. But when the young male dancer turned you could see the scars on his legs left from bayonet wounds.

The male was Cuban. He had left his country with 130,000 other Cubans but because he was a homosexual guards had physically harassed him. This man is not a unique refugee. He sits in temporary housing behind barbed wire waiting to be set free once again.

According to Rev. Bob Arthur, Director of the Cuban Relief Fund, there are about 3,000 to 5,000 gay men and lesbians needing to be placed in the United States.

Despite their present living conditions, the refugees are filled with hope and thankful to be free. Arthur told of another man in the camp. "He was able to go to the beach and when he saw the water he stripped off his clothing and ran into the water yelling, "I'm free, I'm free, I'm free!"

The reason so many gay and lesbian Cubans are still in the four camps is because they must have a sponsor before the government will allow them to leave.

Approximately 300 refugees have been placed through the UFMCC. In addition to housing there is need to have employment training and job placement. Because they were only allowed to take what they were wearing when they left Cuba, there is a tremendous need for clothing.

Most of the gay Cubans do not speak English because no English has been taught in Cuba since 1959. Russian is their second language. Help will be needed to teach English.

According to Arthur there are few lesbians being placed and women sponsors are needed.

UFMCC is working with nine agencies. "We have gotten the most cooperation from Church World Services."

Arthur explained how he was treated by CWS at Ft. Indian Town Gap, PA. When Arthur and Rev. Bruce Hughes got to the office outside the camp which processes relatives looking for refugees, the director looked up at Arthur and said, "You mean you're here to help with the gays?"

"He locked up his busy office and introduced me to everyone. The State and Immigration Department referred to us as the 'Saviors of the Gay situation.' "

Initially there were problems finding agencies who would work with UFMCC. "The national organizations were afraid to work with us because of the gay issue but the people at the camps working for these same organizations were so thrilled that we were willing to help that arrangements were made," Arthur explained.

Many of our gay brothers and sisters have paper work which states they are homosexuals. This is by self-admission. "When the boats landed in Florida the Immigration officials asked how many men were gay. They never thought to ask the women," Arthur said. The repercussions of self-admission to being homosexual are that a gay Cuban may never leave the United States and then return into the country, may not become a permanent resident or a citizen.

They have been granted indefinite parole which means they may work and may own property. If arrested for anything, whether convicted or acquitted, deportation proceedings will begin.

A catch 22 exists for the government if they do try to deport any Cuban. "We have a policy in the United States that no one can be drported to a Communist country. We also have a law that says no gay person can come into the United States," Arthur said.

June 19th was the cut off date for legal entry into the U.S. from Cuba. Anyone entering after that is considered an illegal alien and will not be given refugee status. "The Government still doesn't know what do do, because they can't deport them to Cuba," Arthur explained.

All Cuban refugees have had initial medical screening and can receive food stamps. Individual states will determine what other benefits will be provided. The Federal Government will match the funds of any states but some states are refusing to give aid.

CUBANS continued on page 25

Women in religion discuss future

By Rev. Marge Ragona

In gay circles, when one says "Copenhagen" people are likely to look up and grin and think "Christine Jorgensen." But women are thinking Copenhagen with much more serious intent these days.

Copenhagen was the scene of the mid-decade conference of the International Decade on Women, a U.N. sponsored conference to weigh progress in the past five years and to look to what needs to be done, worldwide, to bring women into the mainstream educationally, medically, and in employment.

In preparation for that Conference, a group of 150 women clergy, denominational representatives and heads of women's religious orders and organizations were invited to assemble at the House of Representatives in Washington and make direct input to the State Department as to what they perceived the current needs of women to be from the perspective of organized religious groups, and what they thought needed to be done in the next five years.

The Religious Leaders Consultation of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade on Women, 1980, were the guests of the United States Government. We had our credentials and our security clearances checked and had three days of intensive briefing by major figures from the world of religion, education, health and employment. For each speaker on the state of things in the United States there was a person to brief us on conditions in developing nations as well.

I had been invited to participate (the entire meeting was by invitation only) and could not really understand for a long time why, for example, one of the Elders or someone far more important in MCC had not been chosen, but I was grateful and appropriately impressed that I had been the one chosen. As we gathered I found familiar faces in the crowd. Women were there that I had met at the National Council of Churches Commission on Women in Ministry meetings that I had been attending for the last two years representing MCC at the twice yearly meetings. There were also women I had met and worked with (clandestinely) at "Journey to Freedom - Lesbian, Feminist and Christian" a conference we had put together at Kirkridge, Pennsylvania two summers ago. But why was I invited to *this* meeting ?

As the speakers began to describe the lack of progress women had made in the past five years, I began to get a better idea of why I was there. I was there for the same reason all the other women were there. We were there because we were women religious leaders who *care* about the status of women in our various denominations. We were women who cared enough to sit through three grueling days of as many as eight major one-hour speeches on the current status of women and not become impatient as we heard over and over again the depressing news that not only had not much progress been made, but in almost every area women have lost ground in the past five years.

Certainly the most interesting speaker of the entire group was Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, a Catholic theologian from Notre Dame Seminary at Hyattsville, Maryland. Schussler-Fiorenza knows about MCC; we had time to talk after one of the speeches, and she said to me "Someone told me that I need to meet with your people and talk with them about liberation theology. They told me we would get along." She spoke to us about the role of religion and religious institutions in women's struggle for justice and wholeness. Probably the most amusing part of her speech was her description of Anita Bryant (then still married to Bob Green) waiting at the door for her husband to come home and telling herself "Jesus is coming home to me, now." None of us will forget Schussler-Fiorenza's angry German accent as she hissed "That's IDOLATRY of the worst kind!" For those of us who have pleaded for language in the church that reflects God's male and female creation, Schussler-Fiorenza's talk was a rallying cry for us to keep working.

Another moving point was when the Black director of the Conference on the City at Riverside Church in New York spoke on the meaning that the Christian faith has had for Black men and women, the comfort and the hope, and the strength to work against oppression that her people have gained from their deeply held Christian beliefs. Then I knew one of the reasons I was there -- because as that discussion opened up for participation, I, too, could stand and speak for those of us in MCC and in the gay denominational caucuses and speak to the women who were part of the conference and tell them, too, that gay people were learning and had learned from our Black brothers and sisters, that the Christian faith does, indeed, give strength for us to work against oppression -- only in our case, the oppression comes from within the church far too much of the time. I recognized that among the people who had been the inviters there were gay women who, because of their prominence in major denominations could not say some of the things that *I* as the openly gay and unafraid participant could say -- and those who knew me knew that I *would* say -- to the women assembled there.

Certainly the information given us was frightening. All of us were a little startled when Congresswoman Lindy Boggs told us that Congress had been approached by a group of scientists who were ready to patent a *new form of life* which they had created in the laboratory. The bioethicists among the group had much to say to Congresswoman Boggs from their special area of expertise, and we listened both fascinated and maybe even a little terrified that humanity was going to have to deal with the ethics of new life when we had never really begun to deal ethically with our fellow humans who were so much like us, but who, because of minor differences of skin color, language, or sexuality were sorely oppressed.

We were totally impressed with the candor and expertise of Koryne Horbal, the U.S. Delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Horbal is a woman with a 12th grade education, who came out of a small town in the midwest and who now is one of the most important women in world political circles -- who manages a career, a family, a work schedule that would kill most people, and whose family is willing to part with her nearly six months of the year while she is in either New York or overseas representing the United States. Horbal is down-to-earth, simple, and yet enormously effective. She knows international politics and works effectively. Her ability to *deal* with hot issues was most impressive, especially when she explained the ways in which counter-

measures were being formulated for dealing with U.N. member nations who were prepared to subvert the women's conference at Copenhagen in order to use it as a test area for their fall offensives at the U.N. itself, in order to deal with questions like the Russian movement into Afghanistan, the Palistinian refugee problem, and the Iranian question -- all of these important on a worldwide basis, but having little or nothing to do with the needs of women in the areas of health, education and employment -- which was the reason the conference had been called. We were receiving an education in international politics and how it is played, and we listened hard and we *learned*. For many of us who are sheltered in the loving arms of the church, this was an eye-opening glimpse of where women are going and how a lot of well-prepared women are planning to get there.

Probably the star of the show was Jennefer Sebstad, Research Associate for the International Center for Research on Women. Sebstad had facts and figures that opened our eyes -- real consciousness "razors."

> 50% of graduate degrees go to women; 5% of college professorships are held by women.
>
> 97% of all women who work (55% of the total workforce) still work in clerical and service fields. 35% of the men who work, work in managerial or professional fields.
>
> A male high school dropout makes more annually than a woman with a college education.
>
> The spread for men's and women's wages is *greatest* in Christian nations. In underdeveloped lands, where women work they make very nearly what men make or even a little more (both make very little.). In Socialist nations both earn at nearly the same level. In Christian nations men earn nearly twice what women do.
>
> In the United States women make 59¢ on the dollar what men earn.

The next day, my table partner, a tiny grey-haired Quaker who was head of a Quaker College on Long Island came in wearing a large button that just said, "59¢."

We talked together -- Jewish, Catholic and Protestant women -- talked about our professional lives as women, about overcoming oppression *within* the church. Our Jewish sister, Ellen Umansky, Professor of Religion at Princeton University, talked of the fight Jewish women are making for ordination to the Rabinate in Conservative Judaism, and the opposition of the men within their faith; Nadine Foley, General Councillor of the Adrian Dominican Sisters spoke about the years of struggle Catholic women religious (nuns) have had to be recognized as equal with priests. Many like Sr. Nadine hold Ph.D.'s, are heads of religious orders, are the presidents of major universities or directors of hospitals, but because they are *women* must answer to parish priests who have less than half their qualifications. She told the story of the Dominicans having done something that displeased the Pope and his unwillingness to come directly to her with it as head of the order, and going to the General Councillor of the male Dominicans, asking him to speak to Sr. Nadine. As she pointed out, she had *never* had any contact with the male Dominicans, they held nothing in common except their basic Catholic faith, but the Pope *would not* deal with her because she was a woman.

My table mates, most of whom knew something about MCC, asked me that day, "What about women in MCC ? How many of your ministers are now women ?" And I remember my feeling of pride as I said "Nearly half of our ministers are women. Four of our seven elders are women. Our founding church has an American Indian woman as its pastor. The number of black and ethnic women ministers is growing in our churches," and it was *good* to be able to share with them our very real progress toward equality in MCC.

For me, the most important reason for being there was that MCC is being seen as part of mainstream Christianity. We were there with Methodists, Presbyterians, the whole gamut of churches that the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA represents. We were there as an *equal* participant. We were there because our record of achievement in gaining equality for women is real and meaningful and is respected by women in other churches. There was pain in being there. There were women there who dared not speak out when issues which touched on gay rights did come up -- for example, the question of medicine and the medical community being used to legitimize oppression against women -- as in the case of labeling women schizophrenics who do not fit the mold for docile, obedient women. I did have an opportunity to speak then about the medical community also being used by the religious community to validate its sanctions against gay people. There is *nothing* about gayness which is an *illness*, our difference is basically a normal variant, but it is seen as deviant primarily by the religious community which then works with the legal and medical establishments to *create* sanctions against us by labelling us as sick or by passing laws which bolster religious convictions. In that context, I was heard and people there understood.

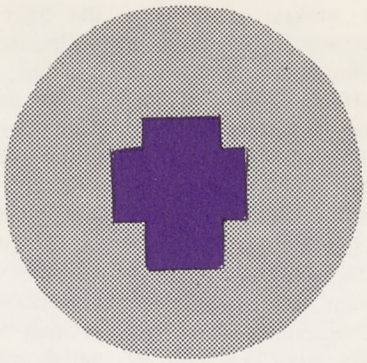
WOMEN continued on page 25

Elders' Meeting Update

* Elders' Meeting in September lengthened for planning and retreat.
* Reversal of previous decision so that now a District Coordinator may use their discretion concerning a lay worship coordinator consecrating Communion.
* MCC Santa Barbara, CA, designated a mission.
* MCC Columbus, OH, designated a chartered church.
* Agape MCC, Ft. Worth, TX, redesignated a chartered church.
* Elders voted to undertake Cuban Refugee Relief Effort assigning Rev. Bob Arthur to that task.
* Elders reviewed chartered churches.
* Elders will review Commission on Innovative Ministries in the fall; removed chairperson.
* Moved to endorse and publish Minister's Manual.
* Appointed Dr. Richard Follett (Miami) and Mr. Jim Mitulski (MCC - NYC) as co-chairs of the Hymnody Committee.
* Moved to thank and honor Archbishop George Hyde for his longtime ministry to gay people and support of UFMCC.
* Voted to award 1981 Human Rights Award to Unitarian Universalist Association and to invite their president to address us at our General Conference in Houston.
* Elders began search for speakers for General Conference.

(Minutes available by subscription or individually for $4.00)

MCC according to M*A*S*H*



By Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

Hardly a week goes by anymore when I don't watch a few re-runs of MASH episodes. Basically, I don't care for television, but MASH appeals to me. A few months ago I started thinking about why I identified so much with this half hour drama/sitcom. And then it all hit me. MASH is so incredibly analogous to how I perceive "LIFE IN MCC". Indulge me for a few minutes . . .

THE CONTEXT: The context for MASH is a tragic, absurd war. A war (struggle) that seems to have no beginning and no end (e.g. the series has lasted much longer than the Korean War ever did, Col. Potter was in World War I 35 years previous, reprieves are delayed, Klinger never gets to leave on a Section 8 . . .) I suppose that I often view the world as an absurd, tragic place in which the struggle (for gay rights, for human dignity, for freedom, for life, for salvation and liberation) seems endless. The MASH unit is an island of meaning in this absurd context. The MASH unit (MCC?) is, in fact, a real community in a very threatening world. They are "strangers in a strange land." This is the setting.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: The institutional context is the United States Army, an institution purportedly existing to defend the citizens of the U.S., and to "save the world for democracy," and other such noble goals. But, really, it is a death machine, at cross-purpose with itself. To carry out its mission, it has a rigid hierarchy, rules and regulations ad infinitum and ad absurdium. A fascist mentality saving the world for democracy! The U.S. Army is the Church (If you don't believe me, read the "O Church" section of Troy Perry's book, pp. 219-220!) The Church is the Army that has fought wars over the Eucharist, persecuted and killed millions of Jews (because they supposedly killed Christ), excluded and subjugated women, blacks and gays, all in the name of "Jesus loves you."

But, there's still the MASH unit. A unit (denomination, Fellowship) within an institution. The purpose of the MASH unit is to *save* lives. The whole drama/comedy is played out of this contradiction: a MASH unit (MCC?) exists to save lives the U.S. ARMY (CHURCH?) tries to destroy in the name of democracy ("Jesus loves you"). The MASH unit is an island of sanity, vainly (it seems) trying to struggle for life in the context of a death-dealing institution (the Church/Army) and the war (the world).

GOVERNMENT, STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS: The MASH unit has all the hierarchy, rules and regulations of the U.S. Army (Elders, pastors, lay delegates, board members, exhorters, deacons, General Conference, parliamentary procedures, By-laws . . .) But, in general, the structures are used to help, not impede saving lives. ("Sabbath was made for humanity, not humanity for the Sabbath"). The doctors, colonels and privates are colleagues, not automatons. The rules are relaxed or often ignored if they are not functional. I guess that's how I view MCC's hierarchy -- Elders, pastors, laity, board members are all people, colleagues, with different jobs to do. I clearly remember a wonderful moment at General Conference when one of our legalists jumped up to tell Reverend Perry, "But according to parliamentary procedures, you can't do that!"; to which Reverend Perry replied, "Thank you, brother, but I just did."

CHARACTERS: But some people (even members of the MASH unit) don't like the "unmilitary" colleagiality of the MASH unit. Notably, Frank Burns and sometimes, with him, Margaret Hoolihan (Margaret loosens up as the series progresses). Frank is the all-too recognizeable caricature of the U.S. Army. "Rules come first, saving lives second." Frank never seems to get the point. He never seems to grasp the absurdity of the situation. Instead, he takes the Army, and the War seriously -- in fact, he seems to "get off on it." That is what makes him both ridiculous and repugnant. He hides behind his legalism, patriotism, etc., while committing adultery on the side (and condemning others who do so). Audiences have laughed for years at this contemporary Pharisee/hypocrite. Anita Bryant is Frank Burns in drag. He's an organization man, a cog in the wheel of the U.S. Army, a Church goer, fundamentalist, or a stuffy Episcopalian, or a scheming Methodist. But also, he's a member of the MASH unit (MCC?) and works side by side with others to save lives; and the ideological conflict between Burns and Hawkeye is always ultimately interrupted by the sounds of the choppers bringing in the wounded. (Ecumenical relations at its best???)

We have our Frank Burns' in M.C.C. Some of us are Frank Burns only some of the time. Some of us are hardly ever like Frank Burns. None of us escape him entirely.

Then there's Hawkeye. Irreverent (when it comes to the Army), passionate life saver. Almost a hero. Tireless, skilled surgeon who eschews rank and the idiocies of Army regulations. The absurdity and cruelty of the war is so overwhelmingly painful to him that he only seems to survive through his "devil-may-care" sarcasm, picking on Frank Burns or Charles Winchester, and drinking too much. Sometimes, he gets put on a pedestal (like an MCC Pastor? Lay leader?). In one episode, Radar is crushed when Hawkeye makes a mistake (he goes into surgery with a hangover and has to leave the patient). Hawkeye screams at the injured Radar, "Don't lay that trip (of perfection, of pedestal) on me!" (Something some of us should learn to scream more often??) On another occasion, Hawkeye operates un-

necessarily on a sadistic field commander in order to keep him from slaughtering more soldiers ("children," Hawkeye calls them.) He used an unethical (sadistic) means to justify fighting the enemy (death). His buddy, "B.J.", chews him out for it, but Hawkeye is almost too maddened by the war to care. He wants an end, he wants revenge. It is so easy for us in MCC to envy the "successful" strategies of the fundamentalists or the bigots. Why do they have all the money and the power? Why can't we use their methods? But to do so is to give in to the real enemy. And that is maddening.

Radar also deserves a paragraph. He is faithfulness; sometimes naive to the point of aggravation, but faithful, never-the-less. His solution to the absurdity in which he is literally growing up is to steadfastly care for his pets and his colonels. His adolescent hero-worship "crush" on Hawkeye, and the tenderness of their friendship is a moving part of the series. In the absence of families, people parent one another and become brothers and sisters. Didn't Jesus ask, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers and sisters?"

Charles Winchester tries desperately to perpetuate his Bostonian elitism (classism) in a context that ruthlessly equalizes (the MASH unit and the war). He isolates himself, and tries not to be fond of the egalitarian Hawkeye. He is a buffoon. We laugh, but we recognize some of his pain, his longing for "the good life," for "the good old days."

LIFESTYLE: In the MASH unit, lifestyle is radically affected. The "abnormal" becomes commonplace (after the initial shock, no one gives Klinger's comic transvestism even a second glance). Sexuality is different in the MASH unit. Nuclear Family, monogamy, "the wife and kids" are a distant memory, or a dream out of reach. Instead, there is a whole different, provisional reality. The hero, Hawkeye, fluctuates between casual promiscuity (the nurses we never see) and intense moments of I-Thou (usually heart-breakingly terminated by the war machine). Everything beautiful is temporary, effemeral and relative. Values are in the process of being developed. There is a situation ethic by necessity. Some cling nobly and honestly to old values out of deep commitments. ("B.J." and Col. Potter, especially endearingly). Others exploit the freedom (Frank Burns, Margaret Hoolihan). But there is an all-pervasive sense of the limitations of human relationships, and correspondingly, their preciousness. The old norms do not apply. Hawkeye's promiscuity and love affairs are viewed compassionately (for prime-time TV!) as his attempt to eke some meaning, comfort, tenderness for himself and another in between surgical bloodbaths. Permissiveness seems the only human possibility.

In MCC we have had enormous difficulty in defining or even wanting to define the "norms" of a Christian lifestyle (particularly as concerns sexuality) for gay men and lesbians. Perhaps MASH can give us some clues to that problem. We, as gay people, have always been at war, under siege. We live in an absurd context, profoundly aware of our own mortality, limitation, of the bankruptcy of "normal" values. Any ethic we develop must be one of *life saving*, of *compassion*, not of rigid or unrealistic expectations. I think it is healthy that people in MCC ask, even plead, to know about the meaning of sexual relationships, the meaning of intimacy, of commitment-making. We *should* be asking, "What does it all mean?"

Then there's Hawkeye racing off in the MASH jeep to Seoul to visit the Generals at the Peace Talks, to plead for peace. MCC goes to the White House, to the National Council of Churches to plead for life and freedom for our people. "If I perish, I perish. I'm going to meet this King." There is often a tremendous sense of futility/cynicism concerning rational discussions with the "principalities and powers" about saving lives. No one will do it for us, it seems. The Army spends millions on weapons and the little MASH unit has to struggle on with too few supplies, not enough doctors or medicine. Anita Bryant Ministries can raise over one million dollars for a new recording studio (all in the name of helping homosexuals become heterosexual) and sometimes it seems like we (in MCC) can't make ends meet to save lives. And we surely don't have enough doctors. But we make do, and the struggle goes on.

MASH is the story of courageous collegiality ("Stand fast, therefore!"; of the community of survival (saints); of incredible endurance ("they who shall endure to the end . . ."); of pathos ("O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"); of humor ("take the log out of your own eye"); of saving lives ("to seek and save the lost," "For God so loved the world").

That's the story of MASH. It's also my story. And I think it's MCC's story. Grace & Peace to you.

ACLU forms gay prisoners' committee

The National Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) today announced formation of a Gay Prisoners Committee which will document incidents of selective abuse or discrimination suffered by lesbian and gay prisoners at the hand of police, the courts, jail or prison personnel, or other prisoners.

Don Campbell, chairperson of the new committee, projected several uses for the data collected: "Our ultimate goal is to improve the conditions under which lesbian and gay prisoners are held. Whether they are imprisoned for offenses related to their sexual orientation or on more general charges, gays in prison are favorite targets for abuse." Using litigation, lobbying, and media techniques developed by ACLU's National Prisoners' Rights Project, the new committee will bring the resources of ACLU's state affiliates and volunteer attorneys to bear on the problem.

Until now, no comprehensive program for collecting data on the status of gay prisoners has existed. Recent efforts by the US and Dutch branches of Amnesty International have targeted a particular area of the problem: recognition of persons incarcerated solely because of their sexual orientation as prisoners of conscience. To date, the International Council of AI has issued only a limited statement of support for persons arrested for advocating gay rights around the world. Data from the ACLU project will be integrated with that available to the international agency.

"By documenting how extensive abuse of lesbian and gay prisoners is even here in the US," Campbell observed, "we hope to provide convincing evidence for needed reform."

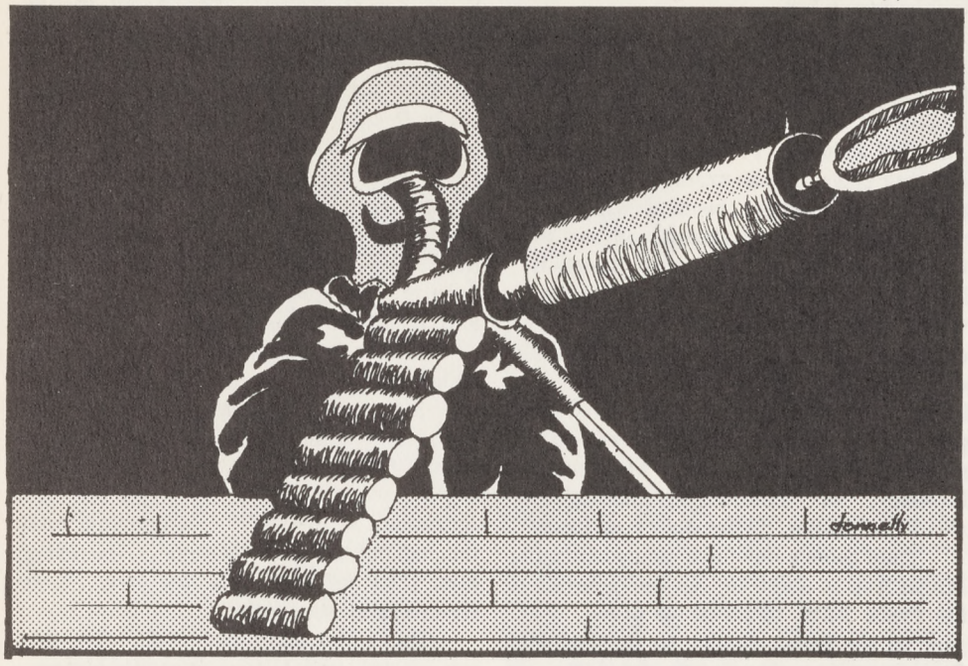
Organizations and individuals who possess information about selective abuse of lesbians and gay men in US prisons are encouraged to submit it to Don Campbell, Chair, ACLU-NGRP Prisoners Committee, 633 South Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90005.

(Press Release from ACLU)

reaction '80:

IRAN

Editors Note: This letter was written last fall. It was not printed at that time because no one could have known the situation in Iran would last so long. The Shah died July, 1980.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Lord has laid on my heart some concerns about the current "Iranian Situation" which centers on the importance of spiritual leadership at this time of international crisis. There are three positions I feel we must boldly proclaim to our congregations, to the rest of Christendom, and to the world at large. I plan to do my part and pray others will do likewise. They are our commitment to justice, our resolve to oppose racism in whatever form it appears, and opposition to war as an acceptable method to resolve disagreements.

We must be sure to avoid the errors of the Christian Church in the past. The error of apathy and silence during the rise of fascism in Germany and more recently the error of the support by mainline churches in the United States for the immoral war in Viet Nam.

RACISM

There are many frightening things happening today and one of them is the dramatic rise in racist assaults on Iranians in the United States. Here in Los Angeles a peaceful demonstration by Iranians was physically attacked, Right-Wing forces organized a hate rally thinly disguised as "pro-American", and Iranian students are violently attacked and verbally harassed on the UCLA campus by organized student groups. As the Church of Jesus Christ we must oppose all racial and ethnic hate campaigns no matter how unpopular that stance may be.

Another more subtle form of racism is the portrayal of the Iranian people as bloodthirsty religious fanatics. The Christian Church must be careful not to commit the same mistakes as it has in the past. We must understand the historic background in which the apparent current support for Islam comes.

The European colonizers and their U.S. successors have unfortunately portrayed their domination and exploitation of the Middle East as a Christian, civilizing mission among the heathen Muslim hoards. Muslim people were told that their own culture, ideas, beliefs and organizations were primitive and reactionary compared to those of the progressive and modern West. While the Christian religion of the British, French, and U.S. rulers was presented as humane and rational, Islamic beliefs were downgraded as backward and cruel. As the result of foreign control, belief in Islam and Islamic organizations became for many a means of expressing rejection of economic and political domination. In Iran it became the means of rejecting the tyranny of the Shah. Just as the Black churches in the Southern United States -- so the mosques often provided an opening for organizing and expressing opposition. In Iran, the Shah's brutal repression of dissent left the mosques as one of the few places where open discussion could take place.

The campaign to whip up hatred of people because of their religion is certainly not something the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches should condone.

WAR

Racist attacks are often a prelude to preparing a people for war. U.S. warships are off the coast of Iran and troops are being mobilized. U.S. military action against Iran could lead not only to another Viet Nam but to nuclear holocaust. As a people called to a ministry of reconciliation we must speak forcefully against war threats and military hysteria.

JUSTICE

Whether or not you agree with their tactics, it is important to remember that the single demand of the Iranian people is the return of the Shah to be tried so that justice will be done -- not an unreasonable demand. Although their methods may not be those we would prefer, the fact is that we are currently giving sanctuary to the man known as the "Hitler of Iran." As Christians we are called to seek justice. Of course, our basis for behavior is right and wrong -- morality and immorality, not some secular concept of patriotic pride. Let's look at the Shah to determine what moral decision we should make.

EXECUTIONS. During the twenty-five years of the Shah's reign thousands of people were executed by firing squads for opposing him. Martin Ennals, Secretary General of Amnesty International, in *Annual Report 1974-75* wrote that Iran had the "highest rate of death penalties in the world."

POLITICAL PRISONERS: "According to the sources at our disposal the number of political prisoners approaches 100,000. The Shah's regime has accomplished the extraordinary feat of establishing a higher rate of construction for prisons than for schools." (Nuri Albala, a French lawyer active in the defense of Iranian political prisoners Aug. 3, 1975).

TORTURE: "There is abundant evidence showing the systematic use of impermissible methods of psychological and physical torture of political suspects under interrogation." (International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, 1976). "Perhaps the most terrifying feature of torture in Iran is its institutionalization, the fact that it has become the most private domain of huge semi-autonomous police agencies . . . The country's repertory of tortures includes not only electric shock and beatings, but also the insertion of bottles in the rectum, hanging weights from testicles, rape . . ." (Time Magazine August 16, 1976).

THEFT: The true amount stolen from the Iranian people by the Shah and his family has not yet been revealed, but the figure is said to approach $20 Billion. Documents in Iran show that shortly before he fled the country the Shah had interests in "17 banks and insurance companies, 25 metal enterprises, 8 mining companies, 10 building materials companies, 45 construction companies, 43 food companies and 26 other enterprises including pieces of every hotel in and around Tehran" (New York Daily News, November 14, 1979).

MASSACRES: During the last months of the Shah's tyranny he repeatedly ordered his troops to fire on unarmed demonstrators. It is estimated that some 60,000 men, women and children were murdered in such a manner. September 8, 1978 has become known as "Bloody Friday" because of the slaughter of thousands, mowed down by machine-gun fire as they peacefully demonstrated in the streets. By the next day alone 3,897 death certificates had been issued by Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery.

This is a partial record of the 25-year reign of murder and plunder by the deposed Shah. 1,200 ministers at the National Black Pastors Conference have called for extraditing the Shah. Our Fellowship should do no less.

IN CHRIST, Rev. Ann Montague

What are we to do?

By Malcolm Boyd

We who are Christians and gays stand in total crisis between the anti-religious elements of the gay movement, on the one hand, and the establishment church of organized religion, on the other.

The crisis has come home to me very, very personally during the past months which saw the publication of my sexual-spiritual autobiography, *Take Off the Masks*. The response of the anti-religious elements of the gay movement was epitomized in a review that appeared in New York's *Soho Weekly News*. It said: "Boyd has pulled off a mask, but he's replaced it with a shroud . . . I cannot accept Boyd as an out of the closet homosexual . . . He is a cripple leaning on a crutch of sincerity . . . He has tried and judged the world's case against his nature, and won. For Boyd to claim this discovery and yet remain in the church, calling his triumph Jesus' work . . . this is not coming out."

The response of the establishment church of organized religion took the form of an attempt by a prominent bishop to have me brought to church trial, and deposed from the ministry, because I am an open gay and a priest, and because I live openly with a gay lover. Other church harassment, often of an inquisitorial nature involving anonymous accusations that I was asked to legitimize by responding to them, followed.

So, the establishment church, that glibly speaks of hating the sin but loving the sinner (both of these, by its own traditional definitions) ends up showing hate, not love. The church, which claims to want, to welcome, dialogue -- does not even permit it. The Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health, which wrote a report on homosexuality for the September General Convention in Denver, chose not to list *Take Off the Masks* in its bibliography on human sexuality. The book, in other words, does not exist. The life of a gay priest, one of its best-known clergy who wrote *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?*, never happened. There can be no dialogue between Father Boyd, and the church of which he is a member and a priest, about his being gay.

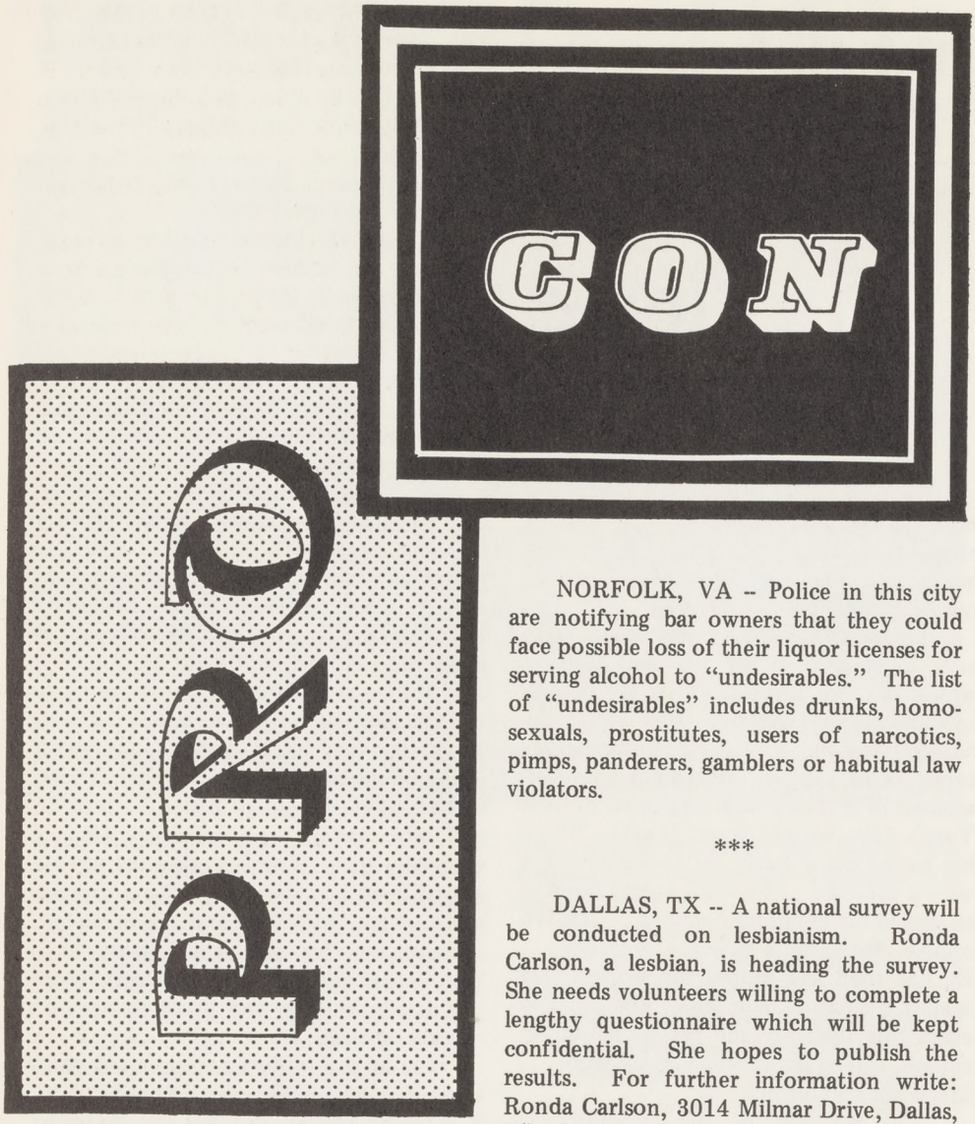
One is caught between the pit and the pendulum, the anti-religious elements of the gay movement (bitterly, vehemently anti-gay). For those who think I may exaggerate, listen to this -- to the dreadful, if misunderstood, cruelty in it: The Anglican bishops of Canada have decided to allow admitted homosexuals to be ordained priests, but they must promise "to abstain from sexual acts with persons of the same sex."

What are we to do in this moment of our greatest crisis? Let me say: It is a blessing, because it forces us to define ourselves. I must say to the establishment church, for example, that I am not afraid of my sexuality; I will not be a hypocrite about it; I accept it as a gift from God; I will not lie or lead a double-life; not two beds in two bedrooms, but one bed in one; I will not act as if sex is unimportant in my life or as if I am dismissing it. I want to be known, I want to know . . . God . . . and other people . . . and one whom I especially love. I seek to fuse the intense sexual need and deep seriousness that are parts of me, with love and responsibility. Increasingly, for me, this points to a relationship with a lover that absorbs all of our sexual longings and love-longings into mutual oneness.

I must say to the gay movement that I bring my uniqueness as a Christian to it. The early church became caesaro-papist when it altered its own unique insights and values, and became an arm of the state. The gay Christian must not alter her or his unique insights and values and become an arm, politically, of the gay movement. We will agree with the movement about some things, disagree with others -- but our basic responsibility is never to the gay movement, it is always to Jesus Christ.

The establishment church is often anti-God, anti-Christ, in its actions toward blacks, Jews, gays, the rights of women, the question of militarism. The gay movement is a melange of diversities, including ours. Why do the gays who cry loudest for diversity seek to deny us our own? We shall inevitably relate to both the establishment church and the gay movement. But we shall not court easy popularity with either. We shall speak the prophetic gospel to both. We shall not change our beliefs and evolving theology to win sham acceptance. Ultimately, we will

BOYD continued on page 15



BLOWING ROCK, NC -- Tourists used to stop at Gay Mountain, NC to photograph the sign. Apparently folks thought this was a gay community. The mountain was named after Gaylord (Gay) Williams, Sr. but now the mountain is called Misty Mountain. The name change occurred because of the assumption being made regarding the residents.

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The Federal Communications Commission has voted to order all broadcasters to include the gay community in evaluating community needs in public affairs and in new programs.

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Presidential hopeful Ronald Reagan has been endorsed by the anti-gay organization, Christian Voice.

NORFOLK, VA -- Police in this city are notifying bar owners that they could face possible loss of their liquor licenses for serving alcohol to "undesirables." The list of "undesirables" includes drunks, homosexuals, prostitutes, users of narcotics, pimps, panderers, gamblers or habitual law violators.

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DALLAS, TX -- A national survey will be conducted on lesbianism. Ronda Carlson, a lesbian, is heading the survey. She needs volunteers willing to complete a lengthy questionnaire which will be kept confidential. She hopes to publish the results. For further information write: Ronda Carlson, 3014 Milmar Drive, Dallas, TX 75228.

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EAST LANSING, MI -- Two gay men were not permitted to participate in a fundraiser for multiple sclerosis. The dance was sponsored by Delta Tau Delta fraternity. The men were not allowed to dance together.

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LENINGRAD -- Three feminists were arrested in Russia for publishing a "dissident" magazine called "Women and Russia." They were released after being interrogated.

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Holland -- The Dutch parliament and a Dutch gay organization are protesting the United States' anti-gay immigration policy.

LOS ANGELES, CA -- Gov. Jerry Brown, CA, has named Rand Schrader, president of the board of directors of the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center, a judge of the Municipal Court.

This is Brown's second judgeship appointment of an openly gay person.

Brown also named Ivy Bottini, an open lesbian, to the California Commission on Aging.

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MILWAUKEE, WI -- A federal judge in Milwaukee recently ruled that it is unconstitutional for the U.S. Army to discharge soldiers solely because they are gay.

Because of the ruling made by U.S. District Judge Terence T. Evans, Miriam Ben-Shalom, a reserve army sergeant was reinstated. She was discharged in 1976 as "unsuitable" because she was a lesbian.

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The National Council of Churches' task force on biblical translation is recommending that the NCC prepare a new lectionary with an emphasis on inclusive and non-sexist language. The task force also suggested to the RSV Bible Committee, who is presently working on an updated version to be published in the mid 1980s, that they consider studying the possibility of a separate inclusive language New Testament building on the new lectionary.

The task force has recommended using the word "children" for "sons" and "ancestors" for "patriarchs."

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As of May 1980, the National Federation of Parents and Friends of Gays has revised and updated its International Directory of parent groups and contact persons/organizations who are available to gays, their families and friends.

The directory is not only a documentation of the volunteer outreach of hundreds of parents of gays, but it also facilitates the location and availability of more than 300 contact persons, counselors and groups throughout the United States, Canada and Europe who have a special outreach to gays and their families.

The Parents and Friends of Gays' International Directory is available from PFOG/DC, 5715 - 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011, at $3.00 per copy. The directory is updated yearly.

All new listings, corrections or deletions should be sent to PFOG/DC.

California Superior Court Judge Stephen Lachs, the first openly gay person ever appointed to the American judiciary, will be the keynote speaker at the opening banquet of the Fifth International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews scheduled for Labor Day weekend, August 29 - September 1, 1980, at the Golden Gateway Holiday Inn in San Francisco.

During the conference there will be workshops, social events and political discussions for some three to four hundred participants from throughout the world. Dinner will be followed by Sabbath services at historic Congregation Sherith Israel and an Oneg Shabbat with music and folk-dancing. Saturday, Sunday and Monday will offer an event-filled schedule of religious services, business sessions, luncheons and symposia on topics ranging from "Religion and Homosexuality: A Jewish Perspective" to "Color Your Closet" (an art- therapy workshop). For the lighter side of the weekend, Conference chair Aaron Cooper announced that plans are progressing for a Saturday night concert.

"The registration deadline is August 1st," advises Irene Ogus, Conference vice-chair. "We're receiving inquiries from all over the world; everyone interested in attending should immediately write the Conference Registration Committee at P.O. Box 5640, San Francisco, CA 94101."

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In May, women all across the United States participated in the Great American Lesbian Art Show (GALAS), a national network of exhibits and events honoring the creative contributions made by lesbians to culture. The network included shows of visual art, poetry readings, performances and film screenings taking place both in large cities like New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Miami Beach, San Francisco and Honolulu, as well as smaller communities like Flint, MI and Woodstock, NY. All together, over 300 artists in at least 25 states participated by organizing events in their own communities.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- "We are greatly relieved that no anti-gay prohibitions were offered to the Legal Services bill in the Senate," said Steve Endean, Executive Director of the Gay Rights National Lobby. "However, it is still possible that, like the 1977 McDonald Amendment, we will see an anti-gay amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives."

The Gay Rights National Lobby had speculated that an amendment (prohibiting the Legal Services Corporation from handling gay-related cases) could be offered. To help build constituent pressure against such a possible amendment, GRNL had notified lesbian/gay media of that possibility and had issued a "Congressional Action Alert" to several thousand persons on the GRNL constituent Network.

It is not clear whether constituent pressure was the reason that an anti-gay amendment was not offered to the Legal Services bill. A number of other restrictive amendments were offered to the bill, ranging from abortion to food stamps.

Was the alert really necessary? Yes, says the Gay Rights National Lobby. "We had a choice. We could put out an "Action Alert" and take a chance that the amendment would not be offered. Or we could sit back and just hope that an amendment wasn't offered," Endean said. "If we had followed the latter course of action, we could have faced an amendment without the benefit of constituent pressure on the Members of Congress. Given a choice, Gay Rights National Lobby will always opt to be overprepared rather than unprepared."

The Lobby cited a number of factors leading them to believe that an anti-gay amendment to Legal Services was probable: (1) the McDonald Amendment of 1977, (2) the fact that the anti-gay Family Protection Act includes a section prohibiting legal services for gay-related cases, (3) Christian Voice's assertion that they were likely to propose anti-gay amendments to otherwise unrelated bills and that such an amendment to Legal Services was probable, (4) New Right leader Howard Phillips' lobbying for such an amendment, and (5) the fact that Moral Majority recently described the Legal Services Corporation as a major center of "anti-family" activity and called for action to reverse this trend.

Floor action on the Legal Services Corporation Act (H.R. 6386) has apparently been delayed because of a backlog in the Rules Committee. Endean stressed that an amendment was still possible in the House and that constituent pressure was still critical.

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CHICAGO - Joan Clark who was fired from the United Methodist agency staff after revealing she was a lesbian, has been named coordinator of the Ecumenical Women's Center in Chicago.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The fair employment legislation for lesbians and gay men in the United States Senate, S. 2081, has gained a new co-sponsor, Senator Robert Packwood (R-Oregon). The Gay Rights National Lobby described the Senator's sponsorship as a very important addition to the bill.

"Senator Packwood, who is considered a moderate (49th on the cumulative political scale of the liberal ADA and the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action), is very highly respected and will assist us significantly in expanding our base of support," said GRNL lobbyist Steve Endean.

Endean described Senator Packwood's sponsorship as a result of a close partnership between local organizations and the Gay Rights National Lobby.

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Jerry Falwell, minister of the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA and producer of the television program, "Old-Time Gospel Hour," has received a $250,000 donation from an unidentified congressperson.

Falwell is also the founder of Moral Majority, a Washington lobby which has a budget of $1 million and supports conservative legislation and candidates. Supposedly the donation was given to his ministry and not to the Moral Majority.

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Morris Kight, a long-time activist for human and civil rights, has been named to the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations by Supervisor Ed Edelman.

Kight has 38 years experience as a volunteer community organizer working to improve the delivery of social services, eliminate communicable diseases and combat discrimination against minorities.

He is a founder of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (GLCSC), having served on its Board of Directors from its 1971 inception through 1977. He was instrumental in obtaining public and private funding for the Center, and as a full-time counselor, helped minority persons in obtaining jobs and housing.

He remains an actively involved member of the Stonewall Democratic Club, which he helped to found, serving as its first president.

The Human Relations Commission is charged with eradicating discrimination, intolerance and prejudice based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age and other arbitrary factors.

NEWS continued on page 31

heresies and heretics

By Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt

One of the more noticeable unofficial topics of General Conference 1980 was the subject of heresies and heretics. Now, that concern seems to be a wide-spread concern. I assume that most every church group received a publication called the "Evangelical MCC'er." The paper presents an anonymous view of what the UFMCC should do in regard to the heresies being shared and the heretics sharing them. While I cannot put much credibility in a paper whose author chooses to remain anonymous, I do think that the author represents a significant number of thinkers across the UFMCC.

Were the concerns discussed during free time at General Conference really pleas for a definitive theology and dogma? Is the paper "Evangelical MCC'er" really asking for a concrete dogma we can all embrace and use for basic criteria in determining our policies and direction? To me, the statements, verbal and written, seem to be asking for more than a return to tradition or a defining of faith. They seem to be calling for a mandate from within the local church group to be able to call a pagan a pagan and to be able to call a heretic a heretic. The concern then would be to establish some very serious guidelines for doing just that.

The idea of anyone within the UFMCC calling (by shout or whisper) anyone else a heretic is absurd. Webster's definitions of heretics are: 1) a dissenter from established church dogma, 2) one who dissents from accepted belief or doctrine: NONCONFORMIST. That very definition makes me a heretic as far as the Assemblies of God Church is concerned. That definition also makes the Rev. Elder Freda Smith a heretic as far as her church background is concerned; and the Rev. Elder Moderator Perry, and so forth all across UFMCC clergy and laity lines. By the traditional definition we are each one a heretic, nonconformist, who has challenged the beliefs of the traditional "church." And now, among us, there are heretics who want corporate permission to call others of us out as "worse" heretics! The whole process of subjection and rejection is certainly one we learned well, and it is the one process we should forget.

In calling for a set of rules and regulations we encounter the danger of becoming an oppressive negative institution like some of our predecessors. We have to realize that an established dogma results in more than a simple written statement. When Luther addressed the issue of dogma, he said that it never comes out of theoretical concern, but ". . .arose from the need to protect the Christian substance . . ." (1)

The issue of protecting the Christian substance is very definitely an "In" thing within UFMCC. We wanted to protect our laity, so we split the magazines, we want to protect our clergy from isolation so we assign ministers from one district to care for ministers in other districts. It does seem as though a large portion of our business is indeed in protecting.

The establishing of a dogma is an unending process - one guaranteed to keep us all busy with pen and paper for an eternity. Tillich talks about the development of dogma and how it grows when he said, " . . . since each new statement was itself subject to misinterpretation there was always a need for sharper theological formulations . . . the next step in the history of this concept was for dogmas to become accepted as canon law by the church . . . canon law is the ecclesiastical law to which everybody who belongs to the church must subject themselves to . . ." (2)

Do we, as a proclaimed "new revelation," really want to begin developing dogmas for our membership? And after we begin establishing those dogmas, are we going to follow through, develop canon law and begin evaluating and judging clergy and laity?

Are we corporately going to ask MCAC to develop questions to put to those seeking licensing like: Do you/do you not believe, without question, in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ? Do you/do you not believe, without question, that there is a way to approach God through exercises like Zen meditation, Buddhist teaching, poetry, music, sanctuary banners, etc.? Do you/do you not believe, without question, that baptism must be done according to Matt 28:19/Acts 2:38?

And would we have Joan Gralley and the Commission on the Laity put comparable questions to lay folk, like : Do you/do you not believe, without question, that as an active member your tithe should be 10% of gross/net/or/proportionate? Do you/do you not, believe without question, that abortion is/is not murder?

Technically and legally we have the option of doing just that and more. We could, through due process at General Conference develop dogma, institute canon law and then rest easily knowing that everyone will think, pray, preach, testify and act the same. Again, going to Tillich. He says of that system " . . . I believe that it is not a matter of the church requiring its ministers to accept a series of dogmas. How could they have no doubts about any of these dogmas? If they have no doubts, they would hardly be very good Christians because the intellectual life is as ambiguous as the moral life. What the church should do is accept anyone who says that the faith for which the church stands is a matter of their ultimate concern which they want to serve with all of their strength." (3)

The faith that we want to be the ultimate concern for laity and clergy is that faith which declares God's love is for all people, that the fully-human, fully divine Jesus was the logo of that love, that the Holy Spirit is present to sustain all of God's children.

If that became our ultimate concern, then we could relegate the rhetorical questions to rhetoric. If a local church group wants to study the Nag Hammadi library, that is not anyone else's ultimate concern. If a pastor wants to share prose from Kahlil Gibran, or Buddhist exercises in a corporate worship, that is no one else's ultimate concern. If Phyllis Trible, Carol Ochs, or James Nelson is the subject for a local discussion group, that is no one else's ultimate concern.

If I am busy setting my ultimate concern to action, I'd hardly have time to revert back to old learned tapes and shout heretic at someone else. If I were somewhere basking in God's love, it would hardly seem appropriate to tell someone else how they MUST experience or approach God.

One of Elder Smith's oft repeated statements is that "you have to stand for something or else you'll fall for anything." Standing up for what we believe is not the

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ranting and raving some try to pass off as that. Rather, standing up for what we believe ought be the quiet gentle business of sharing our ultimate concern with others, in the manner Christ taught. Standing up for what we believe is facilitating a face-to-face encounter with God. Sharing ways to experience and approach God, experiencing God in quiet, in noise, in tradition and in new ways.

"And do you know the color of the eyes of Jesus, have you heard the sweetness in the music of His voice, could you sit awhile and listen to His melody, would you welcome Him if God gave you the chance?" (4)

"Dogma should not be abolished, but interpreted in such a way that it is no longer a suppressive power which produces dishonesty or flight . . . My conclusion is that we should estimate dogma very highly; there is something great about it. But it should not be taken as a set of particular doctrines to which one must subscribe. This is against the spirit of dogma, against the spirit of Christianity." (5)

Perhaps we should all read C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* and hear what the Christ-figure Aslan has to say about people serving good and bad, then re-ask the question so many of us are busy asking.

Footnotes:

(1) Tillich, Paul A History of Christian Thought, edited by Carl Braaten, Simon Schuster N.Y., N.Y. 1967, page 37.
(2) IBID, 39.
(3) IBID, 41.
(4) Monti, JoAnne, "A Visit From The Carpenter," 1979.
(5) op.cit., 42.

* Quotations from Paul Tillich have been edited with regard to inclusive language.

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be proven meaningless, and we will be swept away as irrelevant, unless our discipleship and allegiance are to Jesus Christ.

When society (and organized religion) tell us: "No role models! Stay inside your closets! Tell a lie for Christ!", our joyful response must be : "We will be ourselves, who we are in God's creation! We stand free in the world, for all to see! We tell the truth in Christ, for Christ, our only Sovereign!"

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A Pentecostal statement on gay rights

By James S. Tinney, Ph.D.

Let me say quite unashamedly that I am a Pentecostal. I am an active member of the Church of God in Christ, a church school teacher, a writer of church school curriculum materials for three Holiness and Pentecostal denominations, a lay theologian, and the editor of the only scholarly journal on Black Pentecostalism in existence.

I call attention to these facts, not to boast, but because these facts seem especially relevant today, since most of the sponsoring groups backing the "Washington for Jesus" rally and march are themselves Pentecostal and Charismatic.

If you were to believe the organizers of that event, you might conclude that conservative religious beliefs are necessarily counterparts of conservative political beliefs. Such is far from true. Thousands of Pentecostals like myself believe strongly that the best protection for religion exists in a secular society where no specific religion is favored and where the government refuses to legislate personal morality.

Pentecostals have long preached "holiness or hell" with such fervor that I am afraid, also, that the public and public officials may have come to some false but lofty misjudgments about us. First, I say with sincere humility, having grown up in this religious movement, that Pentecostals are no holier, no more righteous than other religionists. Beneath the holy preachments lies a subterranean reservoir of the same so-called "sins" common to creation.

Second, I want to forever silence those who think that holiness and Spirit-filled living are in any way inconsistent with homosexuality. One of the two founders of this movement was a known homosexual. In the Middle West, during the forties, in fact, a phenomenon called the "free love" doctrine swept entire churches into its orbit. And even today (while it is kept a closely-guarded secret), many have publicly claimed that the Pentecostal churches have proportionately larger numbers of overt homosexual members than any other denomination. In fact, the gospel music wave, which is a unique musical contribution of Pentecostals to the larger religious world, is largely composed of homosexual songwriters, musicians and singers. . .

As a Pentecostal theologian, I want to emphasize that a born again homosexual is still a homosexual; that holiness of heart is not celibacy and does not require it; that even practicing homosexuals are among our best preachers, musicians, prophets, healers and tongues-speakers; and that it is the duty of the State to endorse, protect and enforce the civil rights of all gay people regardless of the personal moral beliefs of governmental officials themselves, or of those who elect or appoint them to office.

Specifically, I urge (1) that lesbians and gay men be named to every appointed governmental body; (2) that the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts be amended to cover lesbians and gay men; (3) that the Federal Communications Commission require equal time for lesbians and gay men when singled out for criticism by religious broadcasters and that lesbians and gay men be granted standing as a class in the challenging of license renewals; (4) that federal funds for all purposes, including student loans, be denied to all religious schools and colleges which discriminate against racial and sexual minorities and be denied to the students attending such schools; (5) that the Immigration and Naturalization Service discontinue making homosexuality a condition or issue for denial of entrance to this country or citizenship; and (6) that the President issue an executive order abolishing discrimination against women in general and lesbians and gay men in particular, in regard to federal and public employment, education, housing and the military. (Presented at the first meeting between representatives of national gay religious organizations and the staff of President Carter, at the White House, Monday, April 28, 1980.)

AN OPEN LETTER TO AN EXORTER

By R. Adam DeBaugh, Director
Washington Field Office, UFMCC

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your letter in which you shared with me your decision to become an Exhorter in UFMCC and eventually to enter the ordained ministry of our Fellowship. I want to tell you that I love and respect you. I also have a high regard for your ministry, a ministry which I believe you have been exercising already, both in your work in the church and personally as a Christian.

But, as a lay person in this Fellowship, I have to confess that I have a concern that almost every time a bright, articulate, and talented lay person begins to exercise real ministry within the Fellowship, he or she goes off into the Exhorter program to become a minister. And I don't always like it.

I believe that we Christians are a fellowship of believers who minister to one another. I also believe in the priesthood of all believers. What this means is that we all, clergy and lay, have a ministry in UFMCC and in the church universal. And you don't have to be licensed or ordained to exercise that ministry.

Now, believe me, if you are truly called to the ordained ministry of this Fellowship, I will strongly support you. You are, in any case, in my prayers and you have my continued support regardless of the course you choose. I cannot discern whether or not you are truly called. Only you can do that. But what does the ministry mean to you? I may be wrong, but I associate the licensed and ordained ministry of UFMCC with the pulpit. I believe that the clergy should, at some point in their life work, pastor churches and be assistant pastors in churches. I do not discount the working clergy or the minister-administrators in our Fellowship and in other religious denominations. In fact, I hope to have a minister working with me again in this office some time in the future. But I look at the clergy's life work as a long continuum, which includes and focuses around the true pastoral ministry. Each of the people now working full-time in non-pulpit jobs in our Fellowship have been very successful pastors and will probably go back to pastoring again at some point. I have no problems with taking a leave from pastoring a church to work in church administration (like Nancy Wilson and Jim Sandmire), or to travel, preach and evangelize (like the good folks in the national evangelistic team), or to head up a department or agency of the Fellowship (like Bob Arthur and others), or even to head the Fellowship itself (like our Troy!).

But it seems to me that we set apart people to become ministers in order to have qualified, trained and educated leaders to assist us in worship and to act as shepherds of congregational flocks, among other reasons. Ministers counsel, teach and guide. And they do these things primarily (though not exclusively, I recognize) as assistant pastors, associate pastors and pastors of our congregations.

Now lay people can counsel, teach, preach, and even guide, but they have the flexibility of being able to do this outside of the demands some folks make on their pastors, and (more importantly) outside and alongside the existing ministry of their local church.

We have too many good lay people rushing off into the ministry. Where does that leave us as a Fellowship? It seems to me that it leaves us with a Fellowship which could become top-heavy with ministers and with fewer good lay people. We don't have enough congregations for every minister we now have to have a pulpit. We don't have enough churches that are able to hire (and pay) assistant and associate ministers. We don't have enough churches that are able to serve as training grounds for young clergy. We don't have enough congregations yet that are able to pay their pastors living wages. And, paradoxically, we don't have enough clergy who are willing to truly sacrifice and go out to start churches where there is a crying need for them, but no money to support an MCC minister. There are dozens of cities that could support an MCC congregation but don't have them because there are no ministers who are willing to go to them and work for nothing while the congregation gets started.

My questions to you, my friend, are: are you truly called to the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Are you truly called to the pastoral ministry of this Fellowship? Are you truly called to be an assistant pastor, and then later as you mature in your calling and your skills, a pastor of an MCC congregation? Are you truly called to suffer along with your Fellowship with low pay, little security, hard work, and seemingly insurmountable odds against you? Are you called to go out into the vineyards and start a new MCC congregation? Are you called to write sermons, counsel those in need, preach the Gospel, visit the sick, feed the hungry, visit the imprisoned, be awakened at 3:00 in the morning by a sister or a brother in need, and guide your little flock to the ultimate victory which is ours through Christ Jesus in the light of God's enduring goodness and grace?

Are you called to a big church, to ecclesiastical glory, to large collections and large congregations, to big buildings, and cushy pastorates? Or are you called to what is the reality for most UFMCC ministers: low salaries, small congregations, condemnation by some Gays/Lesbians for being Christian and by some Christians for being Gay/Lesbian, seeming powerlessness, long hours, little thanks and less recognition?

You talk about your call to ministry. And that call is valid regardless of licensure or ordination. Let me urge you to ask yourself this question: What will licensing and ordination give me that will enhance my ability to pursue my ministry? What will I be able to do in terms of my ministry as a licensed minister that I cannot do as a lay person?

If your answer is to pastor a church, and that is what you are called to do, then praise the Lord and go ahead. If you are talking about other kinds of ministry, think about whether or not it is necessary to be clergy in order to do your ministry. We need competent, talented and spirit-filled lay people to do a lot of important work in this Fellowship. We all have ministries and you don't need to be clergy in order to minister.

I do not believe, despite the urgings of many people, that I am called by the Lord to be an ordained minister, but I do believe very strongly that I have a very clear and somewhat successful ministry in the Universal Fellowship.

Don't misunderstand me, I am not anti-clergy. We continue to need good new people entering the clergy in UFMCC. You may be one of them. But we also need good lay people. It is possible that your ministry may be exercised as a lay person, as well as if you were to be licensed.

In any case, you have my best wishes and prayers as you attempt, with so many of us, to discern God's will in your life. God bless you in your ministry.

A Christian Response To 20th Century Pharisaism

By Rev. Elder John H. Hose

II Kings 17:39 *"But the Lord your God ye shall fear; and God shall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies."*

Luke 1:71 *"That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us."*

Luke 6:27, 35 *"But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."* . . . *"and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for God is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*

Unlike the late Will Rogers, I do not only "know what I read in the newspapers," but I find it necessary to read them -- if not to keep informed -- at least to find out what others are doing. In the past few weeks I have seen two items, in particular, in my paper that challenged my thinking. One Sunday, the first of a 4-part series appeared examining the "emergence of politics from the pulpit." The sub-heading to this article was PREACHERS RALLY TO SWEEP ASIDE THE LIBERAL TIDE. A key paragraph read thus:

> *"Their grass-roots assault is aimed at presidential and congressional candidates who fail to measure up on key issues such as abortion,* homosexuality, *the Equal Rights Amendment, communism and prayer in schools."*

When you add this to the names of the proponents . . . Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker (PTL club, currently being probed by the government for false money-raising techniques), Robert Billings, Hal Lindsey, Phyllis Schafly, etc. From my perspective, they are recognizable as THE ENEMIES referred to in the Scriptures above.

The other article appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution* on March 19 in the obituary columns. It was the notice of the death of Erik Fromm, psychologist, author, and philosopher - religionist. His most famous book, *The Art of Loving* put the total emphasis upon LOVE as the needful ingredient for a better world and better human relationships.

In the light of these contrasting points-of-view, I ask you to refer to the Biblical quotations which precede this article. The reassurance on the one hand (from the legalist) point of view that God WILL indeed deliver us from our enemies, followed by the instruction from Christ that we should love our enemies and do good to them who hate us. Fromm subscribed to this latter philosophy.

Having just celebrated Easter -- the dramatization of God working in the world as a demonstration of God's eternal forgiveness, love and concern for all of us -- that significant historical event which set us free, liberating us from evil and any and all forms of human judgemental damnation, we discover that the celebration of deliverance is NOT ENOUGH!

Christ never told us that evil would not persist. Christ never told us that the enemies would perish. The Scriptures are clear that it was legalistic, moralistic, pietistic people who CRUCIFIED Christ. Like Moral Majority, Inc., The Christian Voice, and Concerned Christians for Good Government -- the Pharisees, Saducees of the first century opposed the "Liberal" "rabble-rousing" (their terms) Jesus! THEY KILLED HIM!! The aims and objectives of the present-day pulpit politicians are no different! But they reckon (as did their predecessors) without God and God's great love for the acme of creation -- God's human children!

Christ's directive is clear to us as to how we should react to them:

> *"But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you . . . and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be children of the Highest . . ."*

What the true Christian reaction is and should be to pharasaical behavior is that we must pray for them, do our utmost to love and understand them. We will go on, because we know that God is on the side of those who love one another. We must continue to remind prople everywhere that "by humans comes death . . . by Christ comes life," even ETERNAL LIFE! Never let us forget that through our participation in the Christian Way, we are confirming to our enemies that we are celebrating the TRUTH!

These are indeed the times that try people's souls. There is nothing new in that. When we can truly demonstrate that our actions and motives are love-oriented, then we can truly say WE HAVE OVERCOME! The exciting thing for me is being at the core where the truth is being proclaimed. Let us join together in facing the enemy with the positive message of Our Risen Christ!

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Missionary trip to the Americas

By Rev. Jose Mojica

There is a great need of IGLESIA DE LA COMUNIDAD METROPOLITANA in the Americas, and we need MISSIONARIES.

This is a summary of what happened in my missionary trip to the Americas. My first visit was to Miami Beach to see the Hispanic gay community there and to visit with the Rev. Joseph Gilbert and Mike. I did have the opportunity to see the great need that there is for a IGLESIA DE LA COMUNIDAD METROPOLITANA. Mike, Joseph, some members of Emmaus MCC and I went to the bars distributing literature about MCC. It was promising seeing all those gay-Hispanics there. But like Joe Gilbert said, it takes a Hispanic person to do the job. Who will go?

From Florida I flew to my country, Puerto Rico. Here I visited Jose Cruz, worship coordinator of our feasibility Study Group, and I gave him the proficiency test for the ministry in UFMCC. Here I did not have the opportunity to visit any bar but I could see the great need for a Christian church for the gay Puertoricans. Jose Cruz has a small group of people ready to start the church but for the lack of money they don't have a place to meet. Is there any church group or district willing to adopt financially this feasibility group so they can start holding meetings and become a church within U.F.M.C.C.?

From Puerto Rico I went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Here I had to stay in a hotel because none of my contacts could give me housing. Joa Antonio Mascarenha put me in contact with several people. One of them was Marcelo Liberalli, an ex-seminarian, and Marcelo put me in contact with Leila Miccolis, a representative of Lampiao, a gay journal, who interviewed me and asked me if she could publish in Lampiao "El Homosexual y La Biblia" (The Homosexual and the Bible), the pamphlet that I wrote. Marcelo's friends look at him as a possible spiritual leader. So I left him in charge to organize them and to start the Igreja da Comunidade Metropolitana de Rio de Janeiro. But they also told me that they need someone from out of their country who knows God, UFMCC's politics and that can answer their questions. Who can UFMCC send? Who is willing to go?

From Rio I flew to Buenos Aires, Argentina. In Argentina the oppression is terrible. I did have the impression of being in a concentration camp. My contact (I omit his or her name for obvious reasons) was scared to death. During my time there I was praying all the time. Even so, I thank God that I did go because I had the opportunity to comfort a fellow gay Christian of God's love and care. After the person had read "The Homosexual and the Bible" that I wrote, they asked me for some more to be sent to some friends and evangelical ministers.

Then I went to Porto Alegre, Brazil where I did have the opportunity to meet the first Brazilian that contacted me, Paulo Bonorino. I did not have the opportunity of meeting other gays there.

In Sao Paulo the things were different. Mario and Roberto housed me and let me hold my first meeting in their beautiful apartment. Darcy Penteado, editor of Lampiao, was very supportive of the foundation of the church there. He said that he will help but without getting too involved.

Sydney Rey and Edson Pauli are the most interested in the start of the church there. Sydney was invited by a friend of mine and for the second meeting he invited a group of 15 people and a lot more that did not show up. He even invited a psychiatrist who brought with him a thousand and one questions. I thank God that I was able to answer all of them very satisfactorily. The people applauded after each and every answer that I gave. I think that he was touched and that he is a potential church member. All those people who were in the meeting looked very excited and enthusiastic about ICM (MCC).

Antonio Borges, owner and editor of *Journal Gay International* is going to help to start the church with his journal.

Then I flew to San Jose, Costa Rica. Costa Rica is called the "Country of Friendship." Here I arrived with just two dollars in my pocket. The people over there gave more power to their nickname, because they were very friendly. In the

EDITORIAL POLICY

In Unity is the official news and opinion journal of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

We realize our three-fold purpose: to inform, to interpret and to entertain.

All staff members and contributing writers will be governed by ethical canons including responsibility, freedom of the press, sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy, impartiality, fair play and equality.

In Unity will strive not to be sexist, racist or ageist in its content.

Editorials by the editor or the Publishers will reflect responsible views, backed by research and fact. Contributed articles will express the opinions of the specific writer and, therefore, do not constitute endorsement by In Unity.

Articles on Fellowship news, news about the gay community at large, feedback to the magazine and articles relevant to the spiritual, intellectual and community life of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches are encouraged.

It is the goal of In Unity to be an open forum for opinions expressed by all persons within our Church.

All articles must be written in inclusive language or they will be edited to follow the guidelines of inclusive language as established by the General Conference.

All articles, letters, etc. must be signed or they will not be published. The editor has the right to edit all letters in regard to libel laws. Length of letters will be determined by space provisions.

The editor has the right to refuse to publish any article submitted for publication. Decisions will be based on readability, relevancy and editorial policy.

airport a man who works there took me for breakfast and kept me company until a friend of mine came to pick me up.

I had the opportunity to celebrate a service with communion in the apartment of a man whom I met through my contact there. And when the owner of the house heard that a Christian minister was coming to her house, she wanted to meet me. What a beautiful experience! When I arrived there I found out that she had all of her family in her apartment waiting to hear the Word of God.

The need that I see in Costa Rica is general. Gays and non-gays as well are hungry to hear the word of God. I feel like staying there to preach and to work to establish an ICM. But I have to come back to the USA. I pray to God that someday I will go back and that there will be a church group or a district or a group of people that will adopt me and this work and that they will support this task. The support needed is moral, spiritual and financial. How can we go if we are not sent? How can we be sent if there is no support? Support this cause because it is God's cause.

Viaje misiónero a las Americas

By Jose L. Mojica

Hay una gran necesidad de IGLESIAS DE LA COMUNIDAD METROPOLITANA in las Américas, y necesitamos MISIONEROS/AS.

Este es un sumario de los acontesimientos en mi viaje misionero a las Américas. Mi primera visita fue a Miami Beach, Florida. Donde fui a conocer la comunidad gay hispana y a visitar al Rev. Joseph Gilbert y a Mike. Tuve lo oportunidad de ver la gran necesidad que los gays hispanos tienen de Dios y la Iglesia. Mike, Joseph, algunos miembros de Emmaus MCC y yo fuimos a los baresa repartir literatura acerca de la Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana. Fue algo prometedor el ver a tantos gays hispanos en estos lugares. Pero como dice Joe Gilbert se necesita a un hispano que haga el trabajo. ¿Quién irá?

De la Florida fui a Puerto Rico, mi país. Aquí visité a José Cruz, coordinador de adoración de la viabilidad de grupo de estudio, y para que tomará el examen de destreza ministerial. Aunque no tuve la oportunidad de visitar ningún bar gay sí pude ver la gran necesidad de una iglesia cristiana para los puertorriquños gays . . . José tiene un pequeño grupo de personas listas para empezar los servicios religiosos, pero por la falta de dinero aún no han podido reunirse. ¿Habrá alguna iglesia o distrito que desee adoptar financieramente este grupo viable para que puedan tener sus reuniones y poder llegar a ser una iglesia más en UFMCC?

De Puerto Rico fui a Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. Aquí, en Rio tuve que hospedarme en un hotel ya que ninguno de mis contactos pudieron darme hospedaje. Joa Antonio Mascharenha me puso en contacto con varias personas. Uno de ellos fue el exseminarista Marcelo Liberalli quien alla vez me puso en contacto con Leila Miccolis, una representante de Lampiao, un jornal gay Brasilero. Leila me hizo una entrevista y me preguntó que si podía publicar mi panfleto, "El Gay y la Biblia" en su periódico.

Los amigos de Marcelo miraron en él a un lider espiritual. Así que le dejé encargado de organizar y empezar la Igreja da Comunidade Metropolitana de Rio de Janeiro. Pero ellos me Dujeron que es necesario que alguien que no sea brasilero, y que conozca a Dios y la Política de la U.F.M.C.C., y que pueda contestar a sus preguntas vaya a ayudarles. ¿A quién U.F.M.C.C. enviará ? ¿Quien desea ir ?

De Rio salí para Buenos Aires, Argentina. Aquí la opresión es terrible. Tuve la impresión de estar en un campo de concentración. Mi contacto (del cual omitiré su nombre por razones obvias) estaba atemorizado. Mientras tanto yo estuve orando todo el tiempo de mi estadía allá. Pero le doy gracias a Dios que fuí ya que tuve la oportunidad de confortar y asegurarle a un semejante cristiano del sublime amor y cuidado de Dios. Después que mi contacto leyo mi panfleto me pidio más para repartirlos entre sus amigos y varios ministros evangelicos.

Luego fui a Porto Alegre, Brasil. Donde tuve la oportunidad de conocer al primer brasilero que su puso en contacto conmigo, Paolo Bonorino. No tuve la oportunidad de conocer a otros gays aquí.

En Sao Paulo las cosas fueron diferentes. Mario y Roberto me hospedaron. Ellos me permitieron usar su bello apartamento para la primera reunion que tuve en Sao Paulo. Darcy Penteado, editor de Lampiao, se mostro a favor de la fundación de la iglesia. Dijo que ayudará pero sin envolverse demasiado en ella.

Sydney Rey fue invitado por un amigo mio a la primera reunion. Este mostro bastante interes y para la sengunda reunion había invitado un sinumero de personas. Pero solo asistieron unas quince. Edson Pauli fue uno de ellos. También invitó un psiquiatra, quien trajo consigo mil y una preguntas. Gracias a Dios pude contestar satisfactoriamente todas y cada una de ellas. La gente me aplaudia cada vez que yo contestaba una pregunta. Creo que este fue tocado y que es un candidato a la membresía de la iglesia.

Todos los presentes se mostraron muy entusiastas y emocionados por la idea de tener una iglesia ICM en Brasil.

Antonio Borges editor y dueño de una revista llamada "Jornal Gay Internacional" dijo que va a sudar establecer la iglesia con su revista.

Luego fui a San José, Costa Rica. Costa Rica es llamado el País de la Amistad. Cuando llegué a San José yo solo traía dos dolares conmigo. Y los Ticos (costaricenses) le dieron honor a su nombrem pues fueron super amistosos conmigo. En el aeropuerto uno de los trabajadores me invitó a desayunar y me acompaño hasta que mi amiga vino por mi. Aquí tuve la oportunidad de celebrar una misa con comunión en el apartamento de un joven que conocí a través de mi contacto. Pero cuando la dueña de la casa se enteró de que un ministro cristiano hiba para su casa quiso conocerme. ¡Qué esperiencia! Cuando llegue a su casa ella y sus hijas estaban esperandome para oir la palabra de Dios.

La necesidad que ví en Costa Rica es general. Gays y no-gays al igual estan hambrientos de la palabra de Dios. Desee quedarme aquí predicando y trabajando por la obra de Dios. Pero tuve que regresar a Estados Unidos. Pero le oro y le ruego a Dios que algún día yo pueda regresar allá y que alguna iglesia, distrito o grupo de personas adopte y sostenga este proyecto. Se necesita sostenimiento espiritual, moral y financiero.

¿Cómo vamos a ir si no fueramos enviados? ¿Cómo seremos enviados si no hay sostenimiento? SOSTENGA ESTA CAUSA QUE ES LA CAUSA DE DIOS.

World Church Extension

By Rev. Jose von Buhler

In the summer of 1978, a few months after my appointment as Church Extension Officer, I received the visit of a representative of the Fraternidad Cristiana de la Amistad - (translated: Christian Fraternity of Friends). The visit had two purposes:

a) To invite the leader of MCC in England to attend the first European Congress on Homophilia.
b) To request information and guidance about the structure and activities of UFMCC in view to work 'in collaboration', if possible.

Owing to economic restraints my visit was not possible, but I maintained correspondence with the representative. In March this year, after further telephone calls from Spain, The Church Extension Committee was in favourable position to send me there.

The Christian Fraternity of Friends (I shall call this Fraternity FCA for brevity in this report), was founded 28 years ago by a Roman Catholic priest. Don Antonio - himself a homosexual - opened his first group in Barcelona, dedicated to the pastoral care and preaching of the gospel to "Marginal social groups." The aims and foundational objectives of the FCA can be studied in the accompanying By-Laws. Although in Spanish, I have no doubt someone in the central office of UFMCC will be able to translate for the Elders. Such aims and objectives are not very different from our own.

The group visited us in Valencia, a large metropolitan city in the mediterranean side of Spain. Don Antonio lives there, and after having been imprisoned by the civil authorities for his public stand on homosexuality and suspended 'a divinis' by the religious authorities for the same reason, has now been re-instated and his work recognised by the Catholic Church in the diocese.

The Valencian group has more than 50 members. It is administered by a coordinating committee (similar to our Board of Directors in local churches), and its members come from all religious denominations and political creeds.

There is a reason for my comment on 'political creeds' as follows: Spain has changed totally since Franco's death. The press and media in general is free, political parties are not illegal (hence the acceptance by the FCA of any political beliefs as part of the all embracing ministry of the group); the Catholic Church no longer holds supremacy and exclusivity in religious affairs, at least officially; personal styles of living and/or life have ceased to be the business of the police, and homosexuality has also ceased to be on the legal statute book a "social crime punishable with prison." (It is important for the Fellowship to realise the meaning of this change in Spain: our ministry there will not be disturbed or prosecuted by the law. We have in reality, an 'open legal hand' to evangelise, as other Christian denominations do.

I was very well received by Don Antonio and the FCA's committee. There was a great interest to learn about MCC, hence I was invited to address the group, a very healthy mixture of gays and their parents.

I took the opportunity to give the FCA a two-evening seminar on:

a) The foundation, structure and activities of UFMCC.
b) Analysis of the UFMCC By-Laws.
c) Theological discussions on our Statement of Faith.

The rest of the week, until my return to England, I was involved in the following activities:

a) Visit and seminar on UFMCC to pupils in a pastoral college outside Valencia.
b) Visit to a monastery administered by Caritas (the Catholic Christian action organization) dedicated to the rehabilitation of drug addicts. The FCA works closely involved with Caritas in the programme of rehabilitation. The monastery, abandoned by Franciscan monks during the Spanish civil war, is in a state of disrepair, and it is being rebuilt by the drug addicts themselves as part of the therapeutic programme of self-help. Spain is at present going through a 'FASHION' of drug pushing (hard drugs), which affects greatly the great community. I spent the whole afternoon with the 19 patients of both sexes and three nationalities who were undergoing cure.
c) Visit and work with the Valencian group in the 'vagabond' project. This is part of the group's social Christian action. The bishop has given Don Antonio a large warehouse, which the FCA opened as a dormitory for down and outs. They have places for 30 people. This work is a great witness to the town, of the Christian value of the gay community.
d) Meeting individual members of the coordinating committee to discuss their personal reactions to the two seminars on UFMCC. One of these persons, who has been a leader of the group for the past eleven years, showed personal interest towards becoming one of our ministers.
e) Giving a seminar in a village parish church (attendance more than 200 persons) on drug addiction, homosexuality and the Bible, and Social Christian action on both fields.
f) Individual meetings with the families of gays in the group, to explain our work on:
1) counselling parents of gays.
2) crisis intervention in family situations.
3) MCC's pastoral role within the family.

All these activities led to a greater understanding of our role by those that were involved, consequently accepting the possibility of our ministry in Spain. Hence, the Spanish group suggests the following:

1) A year of close cooperation and mutual study of methods and principles of work.
2) They are prepared to help in the establishment of MCC in Spain, potentially by aiding in all possible ways a minister or ministers who would like to work in Valencia.
3) After the said probationary year, AFFILIATION to UFMCC, leading to the formation of a study group in Valencia.

After discussion with the Rev. Elder Jean White, I am prepared to continue working closely with the Church Extension Committee, to bring to fruition the efforts

EXTENSION continued on page 24

in spite of you

By Rev. Pepper Shields

In your attempts to prove yourself superior,
you have encouraged me
to realize my own self-worth.
In your attempts to destroy me,
you have encouraged my will to survive.
In your attempts to enslave me
in the chains of your bigotry,
you have freed me.
In your attempts to invalidate my lifestyle,
you have helped me learn to be vocal.
In your attempts to prove me weak,
you have forced me to become strong.
In your attempts to deny my humanness,
you have helped me become aware
of my dignity as a human.
In your attempts to shame me,
you have helped me find pride in myself.
In your attempts to supress me with your lies,
you have taught me to search for truth.
In your attempts to deny my existence
by your insensitivity, you have taught me
to reach out to all with sensitivity.
In your attempts to degrade my forms of loving
you have helped me see the value of loving.

The beauty of a rose is not diminished
by no one's being there to see it.
The reality of God is no less real
when people fail to acknowledge God.
The truth is no less true when people choose
to reject it.
I am no less valid for your refusing
to accept my validity.
I too have been wrong,
for I assumed you were right
in your criticisms of me.
I have mistakenly given you power
that was not rightfully
yours to take.

Whereas I have previously believed
you had power to control me,
I now realize you only create
situations -- I determine how I
will respond to those situations.
No, you are not responsible,
for my happiness or unhappiness.
You do not determine my worth,
or my humanness. My motivation has,
until now, been extrinsic rather
than intrinsic. I have looked
outside myself for direction,
approval, validity.
Now, I realize that within me lie
respect, dignity, validity and
determination.
Your lies can no longer condemn me,
though they may attempt to besmirch
my character.
Your physical abuses can no longer destroy
my soul, though they may maim
and perhaps kill my body.
Your vehemence can no longer shatter
my serenity, though you may succeed
in momentarily causing me anger.
Your determination to bind me can no longer
shackle me, though it may imprison
my body.
Freedom of spirit belongs only to those
who choose to be free -- My spirit is free --
as the soaring eagle is free -- to fly
above the squalor and poverty
of oppression and bigotry.
You have done me a great favor --
therefore I cannot hate you
for your oppression, but rather
love you -- and yearn that sometime,
somewhere, somehow you too will find
the freedom to be free,
as I have found.

Feedback

1

Ms. Scott, have you ever marveled at how sometimes the most unlikely folk make some of the most profound contributions to the spiritual health of others? I never thought about Phil Donahue as a spiritual or religious leader, I just have always enjoyed his shows. Recently he spoke with a couple of womyn from the L.D.S. church in regard to an excommunication of another womyn over her public anti-L.D.S. statements. In the course of the discussion he made a statement that hit me rather dramatically: "Why can't we all (have room to) breathe and (question) and wonder - without being forced to believe what finite, imperfect, paranoid, insecure men have said comes from God?"

I sat in my chair for awhile, then asked my dog if he had heard what Donahue said - (since meeting Ms. Bertie I really do believe other creatures talk and listen). I remember saying a quiet prayer that the anonymous persons who recently distributed a "letter" called the M.C.C. Evangelical were watching and heard the statement. (Have you seen the "letter"?) After thinking about that prayer, it occurred to me that even if the anonymous folk heard the statement, they'd probably just brand Donahue as a heretic or pagan.

I am concerned about the trend that seems to be developing - here we are, a group defined by most of our former churches as heretics, beginning to establish our very own tradition of outcasting people for daring to perceive God differently or talk about God in terms not sanctioned by the churches that pitched us out!

Could you publish a few items addressing that trend? Or perhaps commission Ms. Bertie to put together something?

I am disgusted in Detroit, but not anonymous -

Brenda Cisneros-Hunt

2

Dear Editor,

I must respond to the article by Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart, "The Wholeness of God," in the Feb/March 1980 In Unity. The topic is not really models of God as stated but the paradox of God and evil. Simply stated, this paradox is, if God is all-powerful and all-loving why is there evil in the world?

All Christians are faced with solving this dilemma, but too often it is masked in the guise of another subject. In fact, many people solve it in different ways when faced with different situations. This causes confusion in their minds about God. One of the three concepts must be seen as false to allow resolution. An all-powerful, all-loving being, God, would not allow evil to exist. Therefore, either God is not all-loving or is not all-powerful or evil does not exist. If evil exists then God must either be seen as not all-powerful and thus unable to control and eliminate it or God must be seen as not all-loving and thus chooses to allow these bad and senseless things to continue.

Rev. Arehart states that "God is unrestrained love!" He also says, "Accidents occur, cells grow in crazy ways, parts of bodies deteriorate before they should, people decide to destroy other people." This solution to the paradox is to affirm that God is all-loving to place some events beyond God's control and to acknowledge evil in the world.

The primary position that he is rejecting is the one that sees God as not all-loving. This is evidenced by his rejection of God seen as a "Fiendish God" and as an "Angry God." However, he is also rejecting the position taken by people who see the problems and troubles they experience as part of God's plan and as such, to be accepted as containing good which is hidden from them in the present.

This last solution is the one I have come to accept. For me, God is both all-powerful and all-loving, therefore, I must re-examine my concept of evil. Evil, to me, is deliberate and hurtful with no element of good or opportunity for growth. Often, what we see as evil does promote growth, such as being in a painful situation or having to learn to cope with unusual circumstances. A spanking for playing in a dangerous area may be seen as evil by a young child because all the facts and reasons are not known or knowable at that age. But, learning is taking place. Allowing a handicapped child to fall and then standing back and making that child get up alone may be seen as cruel and evil to an uninformed bystander but it is the best way for the child to learn to be as independent and fully developed as is possible. God deals with us as a loving Parent, knowing what we need for growth in our lives.

Often, death is seen as evil, especially the death of a young person. This idea was expressed to me many times following the recent death of my 22 year old son. I was even encouraged by a minister to see it as evil and senseless and to take my anger out on God. I could not. I can't acknowledge that God lets evil, senseless things happen. Only God has power over life and death. How can the passage from this life to eternal life in Christ be seen as anything but a good and loving gift from a good and loving God?

In learning to live through the death of her husband, my daughter-in-law turned back to God and found love and strength. She found a church family in MCC. My grand-daughter of 3 was introduced to God and is developing a concept of a loving God to the extend of her ability. The baby girl who was born 3 weeks after her daddy's death is truly a gift from God to ease our pain at the loss of a loving young man. No, his death was not evil but an opportunity for us to grow and for him to move on to a better place than this.

Each of us must solve the paradox of God and evil in our own way, with our own understanding. What UFMCC should do is not to insist on the acceptance of one solution but to make clear the true problem and encourage people to think through to their own resolution. Only growth can be the result.

In times of trouble, I recall Hebrews 12:5-8. "You have forgotten the text of Scripture which addresses you as sons (and daughters) and appeals to you in these words; 'My (child), do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, not lose heart when he corrects you; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves; he lays the rod on every son (and daughter) whom he acknowledges.' You must endure it as discipline; God is training you as sons (and daughters). Can anyone be a son (or daughter), who is not disciplined by their parent? If you escape the discipline in which all sons (and daughters) share, you must be bastards and not true sons (and daughters)."

Your sister in Christ,

Rev. Lisa Berry

3

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope I have not made a mistake in addressing you as such. The reason I am writing is because I was greatly disturbed at most of the things that were written about in the June/July issue of your magazine. I want to make something very clear, you cannot call yourselves the opinion journal of all the MCC's if you print articles which state the lie that Jesus was not and is not God!!

While I hold no authority at Casa De Cristo-MCC here in Phoenix, I do know that our Pastor and congregation believe that our precious Lord Jesus is, was, and always will be God!! We believe in the trinity, that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and that these three are all ONE SUPREME BEING! There is no way to salvation except through the saving power of our Savior and Lord's precious shed blood and through our God's victory over sin and death on the cross. Do you people actually believe that an ordinary man who simply lived close to God could save us from eternal death simply by his own death? If this is the official view of UFMCC then I want no part of it!!

Also, if you people ever came out and made this your official stand, most of the local MCC's would leave the denomination! Our Pastor believes in the deity of Jesus and the saving power of his blood and preaches these things in his inspiring sermons! Perhaps you all think we gay Christians go to church just to play church! This sad thing may be true for some but not my spouse and me and many of the people attending Casa De Cristo! We go to church to praise God and worship God's triune majesty of Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Another disturbing thing I found printed in this issue was the article entitled "Toward a Sexual Ethic" by Rev. Pepper Shields. This ridiculous person tries to justify hopping into bed with a trick and tries to make it seem pleasing to God! While I am no saint, I don't think I was in the will of God when I was tricking around. Thank God He has given me a wonderful Christian lover and mate. I wish I had met him at church instead of at a bar, but God has delivered us from that life. I think it is the will of God that our churches offer fellowship activities to single gays so they can meet other gay Christians and not play those endless bar games. God does not intend for his children to be lustful creatures. Contrary to what the article stated, the Lord does have moral guidelines for we as Christians to follow!

In closing, I want to tell you that I am praying that God will reveal His truths to you and that you will allow people who believe in the Word of God to be able to have articles in your magazine. Also, don't come down on our Pastor. He had nothing to do with the writing of this letter! I do want to talk to him and see what he thinks of the lies printed in what is supposed to be the opinion magazine of the Fellowship our church belongs to!

May God Touch Your Lives,

Howard W. Dulany

4

Dear Ms. Scott:

The by-laws of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, in Article III, Section A (Doctrine), state: "We believe in one triune God, of one substance, in the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . . ."

In the June/July, 1980 issue of "In Unity", in the article entitled "The Trek" by Shelley Hamilton, the following statements are made: "I do not believe that Jesus was God . . . The Father God in the Sky and the round, warm Earth Goddess are one and the same."

We believe that these statements are in direct contradiction of UFMCC by-laws and doctrine and of the fundamental tenets of Christianity. We do not believe that such material is appropriate for distribution in the church, so we are returning the copies of "In Unity" which were sent to us. Please credit our account.

In the love and service of Jesus Christ,

Ms. Katherine Schulte
Clerk, for the Board of Directors

5

T. Earlye, Kurt, Pepper and Staff of In Unity --

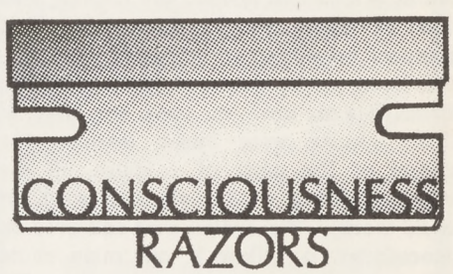
Congratulations on a superb In Unity (June-July 1980).

I love publications that I can cry my way through and your multi-articled "Trekkers" account was fantastically inspired.

The whole issue -- cover, layout, ease of reading, articles, photos and chit-chat combined to make a delightful package -- and one that speaks of all the work you've all put into it. God bless you.

Love,

Sylvia Pennington
(MCC - Santa Barbara)



FOR 40 YEARS THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE CONDUCTED A SYPHILIS STUDY IN WHICH 400 BLACK MEN WERE USED AS MEDICAL GUINEA PIGS. THESE MEN WERE LEFT UNTREATED, EVEN AFTER THE PENICILLIN CURE WAS DISCOVERED, SO THAT DOCTORS COULD STUDY THE COURSE OF UNTREATED SYPHILIS. THE MEN WERE NEVER TOLD THEY HAD THE DISEASE.

". . .28 BLACK MEN, AND PERHAPS AS MANY AS 100 OR MORE IN THE STUDY, HAVE DIED DIRECTLY AS A RESULT OF UNTREATED SYPHILIS, WHILE 154 HAVE DIED OF THE DISEASE'S GRIM SIDE EFFECTS."

EBONY, NOV/72

a message from your Fellowship Committee on Racism

Bird's Eye View Of God's World

By Rev. June Norris

It all began last year in November. Dixie, my daughter, and I were talking about things we would like to do "some day." She told me she and a few of her friends were planning to do a parachute jump. My ears really perked up. I had always wanted to learn to fly and a jump sounded like the next best thing and I told her so. She asked me why I didn't go and I said I couldn't afford it. She asked if I would do it if someone else paid for it and I said, "Yes!" She said . . . "You've got it . . . this is my Christmas present to you. I wanted it to be something really *special*."

Plans were made and dates were set and changed several times to accomodate some of the people in the group. Finally in February we were all able to go.

We arrived at Perris Valley Paracenter about 8 a.m. and learned the training area was all under water. Four more 'first jumpers' joined our group so our instructor, Bill Reed, set up classes on the parking lot. From 9 a.m. until we took our jump at 4:30 p.m.we were busily learning the names of the parts of a chute, all the technicalities of what made them work (or NOT work). We drilled over and over on procedures to follow if our main chute failed to open or malfunctioned. We jumped from a bench about shoulder high to me, learning to roll as we landed. We sat in a swing that simulated riding down in the chute and drilled the proper way to pull the cord on our auxiliary chute. By the time we were ready to dress for the jump I was utterly exhausted. Sitting at a desk all day hardly had me prepared to exert all those muscles! I was beginning to feel a definite fear of the main chute malfunctioning and to imagine the auxiliary wouldn't open. I saw a rusty looking spot on the ground and was certain it was the spot where some poor soul had plunged to his or her death. I was sure I would never be able to guide this monstrosity to the proper landing area and that I would land in some deep water and drown.

I was not prepared for the weight I was to carry! When I had the two chutes, the heavy boots, coveralls and helmet in place I could not stand erect! Someone had to push me up the stairs and to help me from a sitting position on the floor of the plane when it came time to jump. Dixie was chosen as the first to go and I was second. When she was outside the plane I saw a look of pure terror cross her face. Then I heard her hit the side of the plane and my heart sank . . . what would happen to her?? At that instant he said "GO" to me and there wasn't time to think . . . I was out the door.

Bill had told us the plane was going 80 mph and we would be traveling at the same speed the moment we stepped out, but I just wasn't prepared for the FORCE of the wind. I remembered to spread my arms and legs but forgot all about counting . . . spread thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, check thousand and look to see if the chute had opened! I felt tossed like a leaf, then suddenly a jerk of the parachute opening and I was airborne! Then I remembered to check the chute for holes that didn't belong there, for a "Mae West" caused by cords becoming entangled in the nylon body of the chute. All was in order and I was floating in complete silence. I wondered if I had gone deaf . . . but decided to just enjoy God's world at 3,000 feet in the air. I searched for the two wooden spools (toggles) to guide my descent, found them and turned myself all the way around first to the left then to the right. Now it was time to seek my landing spot, and work at steering this thing to target earth.

The descent seemed rapid and as I neared the ground I carefully noted the wind directional signal and turned to face the direction of the wind. Since we landed at seven miles per hour without a breeze, if we let it blow against our backs we would be going at 7 mph plus the speed of the wind. I was now in position . . . facing the wind, feet locked firmly together to form a single post . . . and then I landed. I forgot to roll so the windfilled chute pulled me backwards and began to drag me around the radish field where I had landed. I was trying to deflate that thing but it seemed to defy all efforts. Finally I got the air out, got to my feet and gathered up yards and yards of nylon cords and material. I was literally dragging my feet by the time I got back to the parking lot!

We turned in our gear and our first jump certificates were issued. Bill told me I wasn't the oldest person to jump but not very many 57 year old women had been in his classes. With pride, all ten of us who had shared this experience, began to tell of our feelings when we were airborne. We were all greatly thrilled . . . no one was injured . . . and we all began to plan the time to take our free jump. No, I didn't do it again, but I will never forget the thrill, the peace and above all God's beautiful creations from 3,000 feet above the earth!

TOP: The swing simulates riding in the chute. ABOVE: June Norris and daughter, Dixie Austin.

EXTENSION continued from page 20
already begun in Spain, as I am the only person who speaks Spanish in our ministerial caucus here. Future work will be documented with reports to the CEC, and close discussion with the Rev. Elder Jean White.

I must take this opportunity to thank the members of the CEC for supporting my visit to the Spanish FCA.

Submitted on: 6th April 1980 day of the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection.

WOMEN continued from page 7

Probably the loneliest person there was Letha Scanzoni -- who represented the Evangelical Women's Caucus -- for she was the only feminist from Evangelical circles who thought enough of what women were doing to want to be there. I had an opportunity to personally say thanks for all of us in MCC to her for her book *Is the Homosexual my Neighbor ?*

I came home impatient. Impatient because while we are ordaining more and more women, we still have much to do to make our faith truly representative of both men and women. We haven't really dealt with our language problems in the church -- and that more than any other single issue was brought out by every one of the reactor groups as an important issue for women in their denomination -- to the point where some of the denominations are talking about changing the very name of their denomination to reflect the increased participation of women; for example, the Church of the Brethren is looking for a new name for its denomination to reflect the increasing number of women in denominational executive positions and in its clergy.

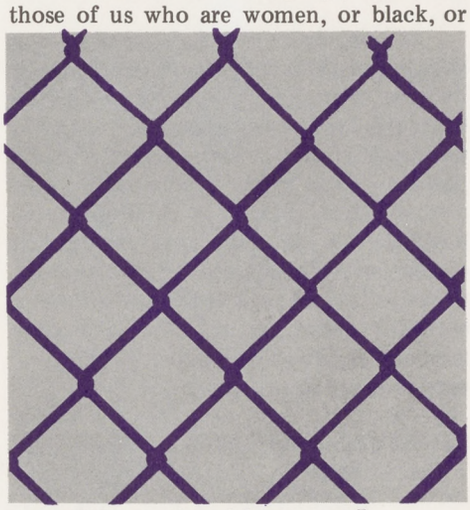
I came home with a renewed sense of mission. There is work to be done. I came home with some of the old anger I thought I had worked through -- mainly because of the *lost ground*, and the fact that if we don't keep on working for progress, we will tend to slide backward. I came home ready to work, and work hard, and to begin to reach out to other women clergy in my own area -- not just MCC women -- but women who need a pat on the back, a hand held out in friendship, and a word of encouragement when they come up against the hierarchies in their own denominations and are given a hard way to go. My way is not as difficult, and from *my* strength there may be something I can do for the women near me who may just need to hear that kind of strength speaking out to them.

I also came home with more information than I can ever give here, so possibly some of it will be coming out in bits and pieces over a period of time as I get a chance to reflect and understand just what I did learn. I do expect to share Schussler-Fiorenza's talk with you, for she has given us permission to publish it in *The Gay Christian*. I also expect to share some of Jennefer Sebstad's facts and figures with you in the "Consciousness Razors" column of *In Unity*, because I think there are some things about being women that we all need to be aware of -- particularly our hidden oppression.

I'm not really *glad* I went because I came home disturbed by what I learned, but I am glad I had the opportunity to be there and represent MCC there. I'm grateful for the political education I received at Washington and I hope to share more of that with you later.

Copenhagen will be a meeting to watch -- just as Houston and Mexico City were places for women to watch. I'm glad we have an MCC at Copenhagen, and I hope our sisters there will be able to attend for us. We need to keep ourselves informed on not only our own narrow parochial view of the world seen through gay eyes, but those of us who are women, or black, or doubly or triply oppressed need to be aware of who we are, who our oppressors are and how we can counter that oppression. When we do that, it is a sign that we have grown up politically.

As we began the meeting and as we ended it, we shared our common spiritual tradition. We prayed to our One God, we sang our thanks for having come so far, and we asked for guidance on the road ahead. The heads bowed in reverence shared their faith, renewed their hope, and deepened their commitment to God and to all men and women everywhere -- a commitment that grew out of a faith journey all of us were on -- to wholeness and justice for all people everywhere.



CUBANS continued from page 5

Arthur said that the government hopes to have all camps closed by October since none of them have heating facilities.

Besides gays the government is also having difficulty placing prostitutes and single men. In fact, many of the 1500 single straight men left in Florida are saying they are gay so they can be placed. "The government wants us to come there to screen these men to determine if they are sponsorable by MCC. They are paying for everything," Arthur said.

Many of the refugees were in prison and are again in prison in the U.S. because of self-admission to crimes. Some of the offenses which are punishable by incarceration in Cuba are being over-dressed or for buying two bags of rice on the black market.

Gays in Cuba are not allowed to work and many straight refugees hate homosexuals and want them sent back to Cuba.

"Because of this kind of harassment many gays have segregated themselves at the camps for self-protection," Arthur said.

The camps are located at Ft. Indian Town Gap, PA; Eglin Air Force Base, FL; Ft. Chaffey, AR and Ft. McCoy, WI.

Advertisement

SHARING AND GROWING

By Rev. Richard R. Mickley, M.A.

Rev. Mickley has taken a leave of absence to obtain a doctor's degree in Clinical Psychology.

He has obtained his master's degree in counseling psychology and his master's thesis is a handbook of enrichment ideas intended for use as a self-help manual for gay men in a committed relationship, or for those who wish they were, or for those who counsel men in committed gay relationships.

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fellowship family

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA

The Rev. J.E. Paul Breton, Pastor of Trinity Metropolitan Community Church in San Bernardino, has been accepted into membership in the St. Bernard's Seminary Alumni Association.

St. Bernard's Seminary is a Roman Catholic theological institution for graduate studies. Located in Rochester and established in 1898, the seminary has provided training for priests of several Roman Catholic dioceses. Currently in a theological consortium in Rochester, along with Colgate School of Divinity, the seminary offers a Master of Divinity to students for the Roman Catholic priesthood and other students, lay and clergy in the consortium.

Rev. Breton was a student at St. Bernard's for the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT during the years of 1960 through 1964, having completed senior years of undergraduate studies and two years of graduate theological studies. Rev. Breton left the seminary after having been tonsured a cleric.

In submitting his application for membership in the Association, Rev. Breton sent a letter specifically detailing the fact that he is Gay and an ordained minister in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches because he believes that the Church of Jesus Christ needs to offer a positive and affirmative ministry of public support and encouragement to the homosexual, as well as other communities. In his letter, Rev. Breton expressed his disappointment at the fact that a positive ministry with and for the Gay and Lesbian is still not yet available in the Roman Catholic Church. The letter was sent to Mr. Nimr S. Ibrahim, Director of the St. Bernard's Seminary Alumni Association.

Membership in the Association was approved without comment in June, 1980. It is Rev. Breton's hope that participation in this association will be another door opened toward dialogue within the Roman Catholic Church on the issue of homosexuality and the ministry the Church needs to provide with its children who happen, by the grace of God, to be Gay or Lesbian.

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SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Picture, if you will, a quite picturesque little community with the Pacific Ocean at its front door and a panoramic view of the Southern California mountains at its back door and you have just discovered Santa Barbara. This beautiful little community recently conducted an "Operation Resurrection" with 20 of their 28 members in attendance. This "core" of hard working Christians spent what proved to be a beautiful entire day outlining what they want to see happen in and with MCC over the next year. Such plans as:

- -- Double plus of their present membership.
- -- Establishment of a working Outreach Team to meet the needs of the "whole" community.
- -- Establishment of an Inreach Team that will help the Pastor nourish the Church Community.
- -- A working Christian Education Team to help the Pastor educate both the Church Community and the community as a whole on what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ.
- -- To increase their budget by $800.00 by May of 1981.

With these plans and more they also drew up a Church Covenant defining their relationship to God and out of that what God has called them to do.

For me personally it was an exciting "high" to share in the day with them, with their agreements, their disagreements, their sharing and loving and their worship services. I look forward with anticipation to watching them grow and returning to my new "family" and once more sharing.

By Philip Gallnitz

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TULSA, OKLAHOMA

MCC of Greater Tulsa is excited about moving into their *new* building at 1623 North Maplewood, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The building contains an auditorium, fellowship hall, kitchen and classroom space. The building was financed in just a few months by the issuing of mortgage bonds.

Rev. Alice Jones was asked to speak at Oral Roberts University. She is the first openly gay person to speak at Oral Roberts University.

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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

On Sunday, June 8, MCC Richmond celebrated its second anniversary - one year as a study group and one year as a mission. Members and friends of the congregation gathered for a cook-out at the Pastor's home. Rev. Delores Berry, Assistant Pastor of MCC Baltimore, was invited to preach at the worship service on Sunday evening.

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KEY WEST, FLORIDA

After a light rain, the clouds lifted and it was a sunshiny morning in Key West as the pianist ended a classical prelude and a group of 24 joined together singing the message that "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations." And indeed they did, for they were the participants at the opening worship service of Metropolitan Community Church of Key West and they were telling the story that MCC has proclaimed throughout the world: God's love is for all people, including all gay people.

Greetings and congratulations were sent from many other MCC's including those in Dallas, Miami, Ft. Meyers, Tallahassee and the Fellowship offices in Los Angeles. Peter Ilchuk, owner of the Banyan Guesthouse, welcomed MCC on behalf of the Key West community and shared that "one of the things I thought was missing in Key West was some sort of

spiritual involvement. Since I moved here the traditional churches have not reached out to me. I hope we can all work together in bringing about this church in Key West."

The Rev. Robert Copestake, formerly the Associate Pastor at MCC Dallas, was authorized by the Elders of the Universal Fellowship Of Metropolitan Community Churches to move to Florida and conduct a feasibility study for a church in Key West. Copestake was selected to pastor the Key West group and was instructed to conduct worship services and do all that is necessary for the life and growth of this new congregation. His opening sermon recalled the beginnings of MCC and assured the listeners that God does care, that God is with them through all things and that God always has and always will love them. "MCC gives us the opportunity to celebrate and to share that love as the people we were created to be," added Copestake. As he looked out over the congregation, Copestake assured them that "even though we are a new church we will be a growing church with a positive sense of ministry."

In addition to various weekly activities, MCC of Key West will have worship services every Sunday at 319 Duval Street, at 11:00 a.m. For further information you may contact Rev. Copestake through Christ MCC, P.O.B. 370963, Miami, FL 33137, (305) 573-4156 during the week, or at (305) 294-7054 in Key West on the weekends.

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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

MCC of New Orleans has begun "sprouting" again, and everyone we know feels the Spirit in our growth. We need a new building . . . 6 weeks ago! Visitors and members are seated in the aisle and in the doorway. A chance for a building we had prayed and planned for did not materialize so we are looking again. Please pray with us. This is a desperate need!

Our worship coordinator, Jerry Motto, has recently passed his proficiency exams and has passed the DRC in Austin, Texas. Seeing him last week without the black stripe on his collar made us realize the wonderful blessings he has received to reach this point in his walk with Christ. He has really organized us here and tried to prepare us for this growth and the anticipated growth in our future.

Our building fund is being readied for our move. On May 27th we had a benefit drag show at Travis' Show-Bar, and on May 29th we had a benefit country & western dance at Charlene's Bar. On June 1st we had a benefit luncheon at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in the French Quarter. Sixty nine people attended this very beautiful affair and pledged $1,075 to be split between our building fund and the New Orleans Gay Fest Committee. Rev. Troy Perry was there to speak and stayed to preach at services after the banquet. We really enjoyed the outpouring of faith from our very vital and charismatic founder.

Many workers are being added to our church body. We have a new Board of Directors to introduce: Charles Mercer, Church Clerk; Kip Magoffin, Treasurer; Roe Mace, Building & Finance Chairperson; Jim Rudd, At Large. God is working in the lives of so many here.

For the first time in over a year we are adding members to our rolls. We have a membership of 35 again with about 10 visitors each week. We have devised a fiscal budget for the year beginning May 1st and are behind budget already, (Now, that's growth!) but we are paying the bills and God blesses us daily with God's love and the secure knowledge that we're headed in the right direction.

Our members now take turns answering the phone (call forwarding) 24 hours a day and our outreach has begun to be used by the community. We praise God daily for accepting the problems we place in God's hands. We feel that with our Sunday Service, our small bar ministry and our expanding telephone ministry that God is really moving people here in New Orleans. Many of us know that God has always been with us and, PTL, many more are finding that out!

Our special thanks to *In Unity* for keeping us informed of happenings around the country in our Fellowship. We look forward each month to our subscription.

Please remember our special needs in your prayers.

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PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The Board of Directors of MCC-Pittsburgh at its July 1, 1980 meeting, approved the appointment of Sherry Kennedy, Exhorter Candidate, to the position of Exhorter for a one year term. Kennedy was instrumental in originating and developing MCC-Morgantown (W. VA), (designated by the Mid-Atlantic District as a parish extension of MCC-Pittsburgh) where they expect to move to Study Group status in the fall.

Kennedy was installed as Exhorter at our regular service on July 6, 1980.

OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

MCC Oceanside has opened its Social Service Center with a volunteer staff of 15. Some of the programs to be activated are housing and job placement, counseling, walk-in rap for youth and a military rap group.

Programs already underway include Alcoholics Anonymous sponsored by Alcoholic Intervention and Diversion.

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Rev. James Sandmire was recently elected to be a member of San Francisco's council of churches and is chair of their Development Committee. Sandmire is the first openly gay clergy to be elected to the council.

John Wahl, an MCC member and attorney for UFMCC, is also a member of the council.

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THERE IS COMING OUT . . .
AND *COMING OUT*!!!

One of the members of MCC-DC had been called to jury duty in the U.S. District Court. It was with a sense of civic pride and loyalty that he responded to this call. It was also with his normal honesty that he had informed the case's defending attorney at the time of selection that he had been mugged on two occasions, something difficult for this prominent businessperson to admit.

"Did you see either of your attackers?" "Yes, on both occasions," the MCCer replied. The attorney continued, "Were they black?" "Yes." Pressing on, the lawyer asked, "Do you harbor any prejudice against blacks because of these incidents?" "No, I don't," said our man. Thinking to confirm his point, he pressed the prospective juror once more, while looking at the judge, "How can we be sure of this?" Without even thinking, he replied, "My spouse is black." With the most knowing grin, the judge said, "I think we can discontinue this line of questioning."

----*Nobody* uses the word 'spouse' unless they are filing their income tax, ----except us. (Submitted by Rev. Frank Murr) FAMILY continued on page 31

subcribe to IN UNITY

Eastern ministers' conference

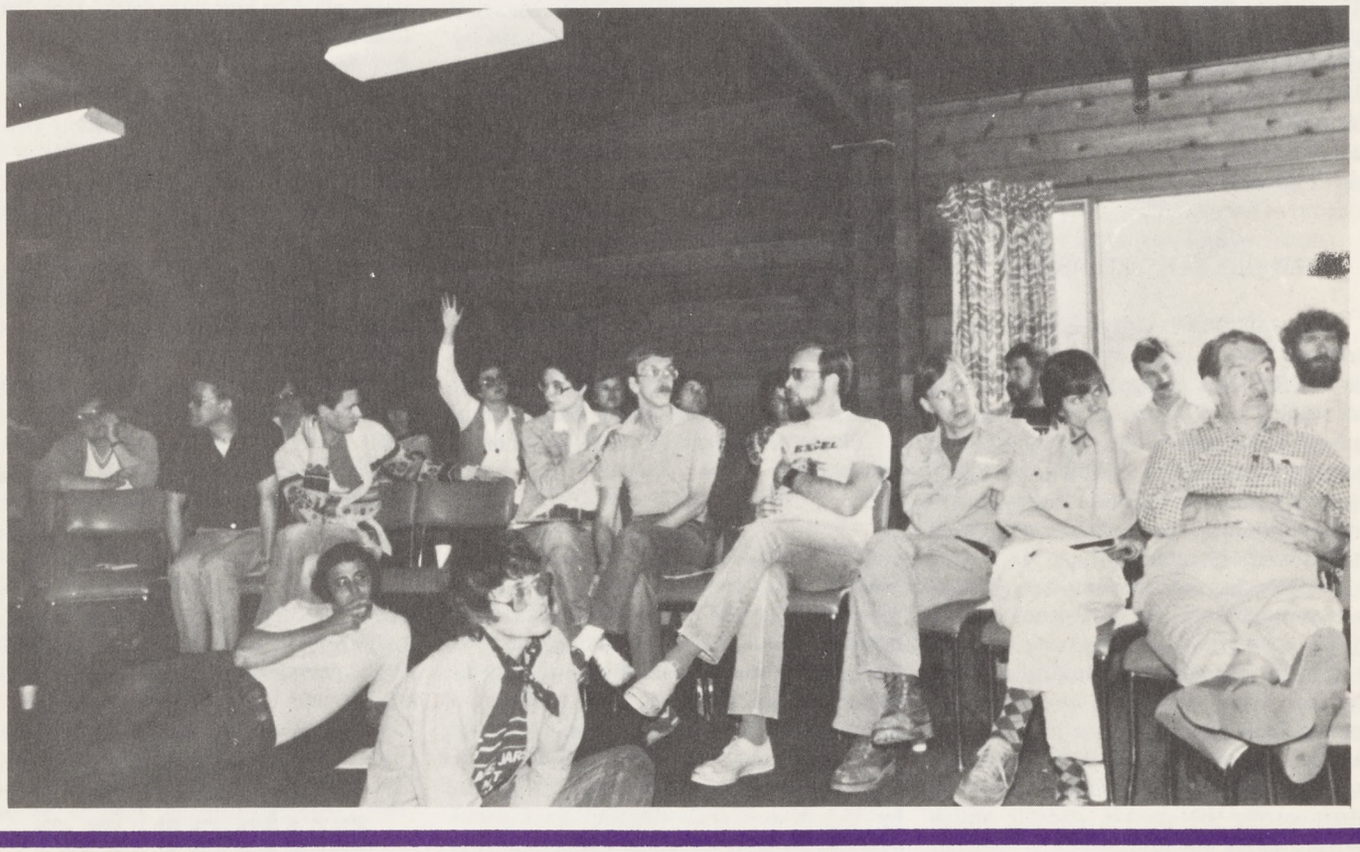
About 85 people (ministers, worship coordinators and significant others) attended the Eastern Ministers' Conference at Cedar Glen, a United Church of Canada camp in Golton, Ontario, just south of Toronto.

Rev. Jeff Pulling and Rev. Larry Uhrig each presented seminars on prayer and preaching, respectively.

Rev. Elder Troy Perry gave his seminar of the "Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit," and the main speaker was Dr. Beverly Harrison, professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary.

Harrison helped those attending deal with such issues as our imaging of God, language for the empowerment of people and the relationship of sexuality, spirituality, politics and feminism.

Rev. Joseph Gilbert planned the worship experience, involving many people and styles of worship, including an "underground" worship experience.



TOP: Fellowship is an important aspect of ministers' conference. ABOVE: Ministers, worship coordinators and significant others participate in one of the many seminars. ABOVE RIGHT: lunch time offers moments of sharing. ABOVE FAR RIGHT: Dr. Beverly Harrison, the main speaker, leads a seminar on "God Language For the Empowerment of People."

STANDING: Roy Birchard, Rickie Richards, Susan Kleibenstein, Joseph Gilbert, Dolores Berry, Bob Angell, Donna Vinson, Art Fleschner, Bob Darst, Roger Hooverman, Chet Jones, Gil Lincoln, Charlie Arehart, Dusty Pruitt, Jon Kuiper, Jean-Jude Berthelet, Rodger Harrison, Val Bouchard, Jean White. SECOND ROW: Troy Perry, Jeff Pulling, Bob Jones, Pepper Shields, David Gunton, Art Skipper, Frank Murr, Nancy Wilson, Lee Carlton, Randy Hill, George McDermott, John, Reid Christensen, Joe Houle, Howard Gaass, Gregg, Brent Hawkes, John Ayres, Ed Hougen, Charlene Taylor, Bev Harrison. THIRD ROW: Chuck Larsen, Ron Pannell, Steve Pieters, Larry Uhrig, Shelley Hamilton, Sandy Taylor, Anne Keast, Joann Monti, Jane Carl, Ed Paul, Don McRae, Jim Glyer, Al Williams, Marge Ragona, Bob Arthur. FOURTH ROW: June Norris, Freda Smith, Candace Naisbitt, Nancy Radclyffe, Rob Shivers, John Gill, Marilyn Marr, Judy Davenport, Karen Ziegler. (Photos by Jeri Ann Harvey)

Letters

Dear Editor,

I read a response to IN UNITY in the Letters section of your April/May 1980 issue. An IN UNITY reader was expressing her feelings about the magazine in this letter. She seemed to feel that IN UNITY had recently undergone some changes and, for her, those changes were for the better. Fine. But her letter seemed to imply that IN UNITY now represented *all* of the Fellowship whereas for awhile there it didn't. She, for an interim, didn't feel comfortable sharing the magazine with people.

I feel, though, that the recent changes in IN UNITY have not improved the magazine. I don't feel comfortable sharing the magazine with people as it does not fully represent the Fellowship as I see and experience it. Those "changes" essentially boil down to the separation of the theological journal, THE GAY CHRISTIAN, from IN UNITY. For me, the best part of IN UNITY was THE GAY CHRISTIAN. IN UNITY, being relatively "conservative" and THE GAY CHRISTIAN, being relatively "liberal" both together in one magazine best represented the diversity of the Fellowship. I don't feel that taking TGC out of IN UNITY caused better representation of *all* of us, nor did it improve the magazine. Maybe you could say IN UNITY now best represents *some* of the Fellowship.

I am happy that UFMCC is so diverse. I think we all get along amazingly well considering our diversity. And I'm glad if UFMCC can produce publications that can make people from such varied backgrounds happy. But I am a part of the Fellowship, too, and I don't think I'm the only one who feels that the best part of IN UNITY has been removed.

I am not interested in criticizing IN UNITY, nor in criticizing personal opinions of any particular IN UNITY reader. I would rather spend my energy celebrating our strengths. I am generally very impressed with UFMCC, partly *because* of our diversity. But I feel it necessary to clarify that because we are so diverse in opinion and background IN UNITY, regardless of what it prints, could never represent *all* of us. Granted no publication could. But I do feel that IN UNITY, by excluding THE GAY CHRISTIAN, has taken steps to insure that *it* never will.

Sincerely,

Sherrie Zimbelman
Good Shepherd Parish
Chicago MCC

EDITOR'S NOTE: IN UNITY was not responsible for the decision to separate the two magazines. This was a decision made by the Board of Elders.

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Dear Editor:

This is just a simple note to express our gratitude to you on the continual improvement of *In Unity*. Your professionalism, creative quality, attention to detail, appropriateness of content and graphic skills are very well displayed in this most recent edition. This magazine is rapidly becoming an impressive organ of communication for our Fellowship.

I encourage you to continue your fine work.

Your brother in Christ,

Rev. J.E. Paul Breton
Pastor, Trinity MCC

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Dear Editor:

I am one of those people who have never given up on IN UNITY/THE GAY CHRISTIAN (and I hope our Siamese twins will soon be reunited). Unlike Rev. Elder Harvey, who could not sell it, at Providence we could not keep IN UNITY long enough to get it to the church. The real "MCC nuts" who loved the Fellowship at a gut level, and who dropped by our parsonage on an almost daily basis, would buy all the copies before we could get them downtown on Sunday. There was an excitement in the air the day it came, dollar bills flew out and everyone looked over each other's shoulders to find out what was happening. The Fellowship news was first: "Who's gone where??" Then the pictures: "He's grown a beard. She sure looks better since she got thin." "Remember X at conference?" It was a reliving of every old friendship and all the activities at every Conference we'd ever attended. Then came time for reflection on the articles with deeper meaning or the serious news of our struggle as Gay Christians.

So what if there were times when IN UNITY was put together by amateurs -- it got to us. So what if there were articles we did not agree with -- we were mature enough to accept differences of opinion. So what if it was deadly dull (as it was under one editor) and if we washed our linen in public (as we seem to be doing these days). It was news from home. It was manna and we fed on it.

Rev. Harvey has the luxury of being in the Fellowship's back pocket, but for those of us in the boondocks, the Northeast or in other distant places, IN UNITY, good, bad or indifferent is read and loved and welcomed.

It's sad to note that in the months when Rev. Harvey wasn't able to sell IN UNITY it was at its most exciting -- full of thought provoking articles, humor and tears -- as it almost always is. The difficulty was that sometimes the level was almost too high for those who had not glimpsed the Shekinah glory of what MCC could be at its best -- a beacon for others to follow, not a sad copy of the "church back home."

I am sorry that we lost so much of the *guts* of IN UNITY by separating out THE GAY CHRISTIAN. The current issue is *nice*, but there isn't that excitement of articles that provoke really deep thought -- and even disagreement. We'll sell it, because our people *care* what is happening in the Fellowship and they will continue to read and devour it readily. My prayer is that someday we will learn that our people need to be encouraged to love our God with all our hearts, souls, *mind* and strength -- and that we don't have to check our brains when we become Christians. We won't die from being exposed to new ideas -- my fear is that we may die by not being exposed to them and IN UNITY/THE GAY CHRISTIAN is the place I want to meet them --- FIRST.

IN CHRIST'S LOVE,

Rev. Marge Ragona

NEWS continued from page 13

NEWS

MILWAUKEE, WI - After a long and heated debate in the Common Council, the council voted in favor of an ordinance prohibiting job discrimination on the basis of sexual preference for city jobs and those doing business with the city. The ordinance does not affect housing.

City lawyers in Milwaukee have reviewed Wisconsin law and have ruled that ordinances adopted by City Councils are not repealable by referendum vote.

Rev. Val Bouchard, pastor of MCC Milwaukee, said, "There was tremendous behind the scenes lobbying by gay people and incredible support among straight people without whose assistance the ordinance would never have passed."

She explained that much of that support came from main line denominational clergy who testified in support of the ordinance.

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INDIANAPOLIS - The United Methodist Church recently refused to specifically bar ordination to practicing homosexuals.

At their convention the 1,000 delegates reaffirmed a social issue statement which says that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching." They also voted to continue to deny funding to groups who promote the acceptance of homosexuality.

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A task force of the United Church of Canada has drafted a report recommending that "mature, self-accepting homosexuals" should be admitted to the ministry.

The report will be presented to the 2 million member denomination this August.

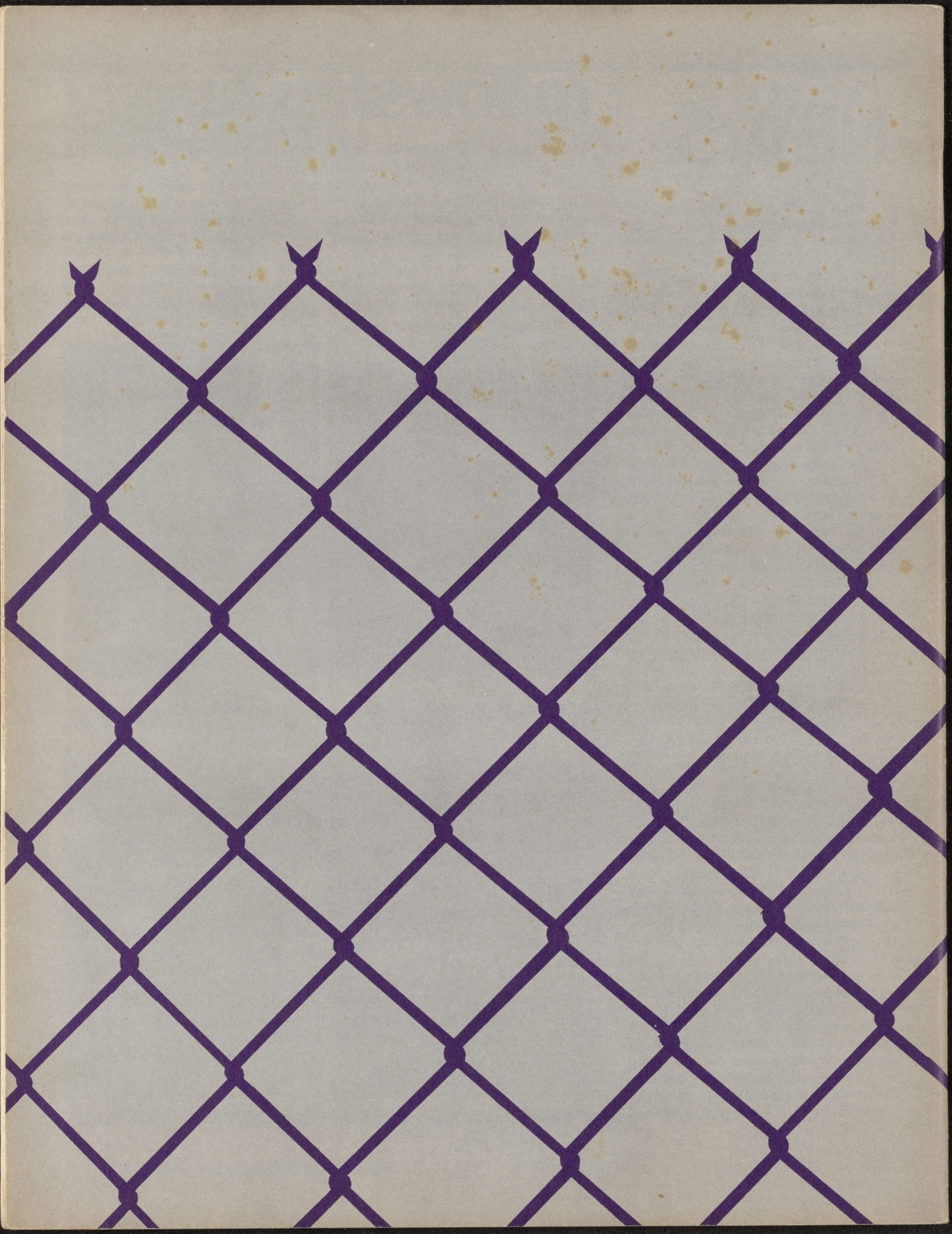
According to a survey taken by the *Toronto Star*, the reactions were negative. One minister has predicted that the report will not have "a snowball's chance in hell."

Other suggestions in the report were that sexual intercourse may be right for singles under certain circumstances and that the church should stress "intention to faithfulness" rather than "sexual exclusivity" within marriage. It also states that masturbation is a normal part of human sexuality.

fellowship family

This summer MCC-Wichita will celebrate its second anniversary in its own building, a 55-year old church bought and renovated by the congregation.

When it moved from the rented storefront that had been its home, the congregation thought the "new" building would be large enough to serve for years. But the sanctuary, which seats about 90, has been filled often enough recently that the board of directors has begun to wonder whether the time is far off that a larger building will be needed.

As an outreach to the larger community, the church is helping to set up a gay hotline, a unique and much-needed service in south-central Kansas. When the line is operational, it will be answered 24 hours daily by Rev. Bob Twar, other church staffers or volunteers.

MCC Diablo Valley members participate in the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade.